United Nations S/PV.6690

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6690th meeting

Monday, 19 December 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Dunlop
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2011/772*)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

11-64359 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2011/772*)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Iran, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

I wish to acknowledge the presence in the Council Chamber of Mr. Ján Kubiš, the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Staffan de Mistura, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General and former Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/772*, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): It is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. It so happens that I recently visited Afghanistan for a week and I would like to share my impressions with the Council.

My foremost impression, based on visits to Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif and on reports I received from our Afghan and international colleagues of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), is that we owe those colleagues an enormous debt of gratitude. They are working tirelessly under extremely difficult circumstances to implement the Mission's mandate. Obviously, last April's tragic incident in Mazar-e-Sharif left scars. But the construction of a new compound for the UNAMA regional office there is nearly completed, and the staff are still on active duty, providing a continuity that is greatly encouraged and appreciated by Governor Ata Mohammad — whom I met — and by the region's population in general.

The future role of the United Nations, adapting the work of the Organization to the priorities emerging from the transition process, and the transformation of Afghanistan were all the subject of extensive discussions during meetings I held with various officials and high-level interlocutors from civil society, the media, the international community and the armed forces. Everyone acknowledged the essential role of the United Nations, both in the past and in the future.

During those meetings, we maintained that the success of the Kabul process depended upon Afghan institutions acknowledging, and increasingly taking, on responsibilities, the review of activities called for in UNAMA's mandate, and the support to Afghanistan provided by United Nations bodies. That review, which is currently under way following the request made by the Council in resolution 1974 (2011), is focused in particular on the best way for the United Nations to support the process of assuming greater responsibility.

Many representatives from Afghan civil society and the international community on the ground also expressed their approval of a continued United Nations presence, and even a strengthened one, given the reality in the transition and post-transition periods.

Civil society representatives, both in Kabul and during their meetings with the Secretary-General in Bonn, firmly reiterated their positions with regard to the human rights situation in Afghanistan. They also forcibly reaffirmed that no circumstances justified

moving backwards on the very significant progress registered in that area.

The joint United Nations-Afghan Government chairmanship of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) reflects the crucial role played by the United Nations in Afghanistan with regard to facilitation and support. I participated in the latest JCMB meeting in Kabul, held on 30 November, the outcome of which is reflected in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/772*). The meeting called for increased willingness and capacity on the part of the Afghan Government to manage its development programme and coordinate international assistance. It also took note of the added value provided by the United Nations in that regard.

From Kabul I rejoined the Secretary-General's delegation to the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn. The Conference provided a timely opportunity, 10 years after the 2001 Bonn Agreement, for the international community and Afghanistan to assess, reaffirm and expand the partnership, both during the transition and in the post-2014 period — that is, the decade of transformation through 2014.

During the Conference, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for the Afghan Government and its international partners to also focus on non-military aspects of the transition. International assistance must support the efforts made by Afghans to strengthen their institutions, advance socio-economic development and promote the rule of law and respect for human rights. That process takes time in the best of circumstances, and Afghanistan will be no different. It is for that reason that the long-term commitment to Afghanistan undertaken at Bonn by the international community — during the transition and the subsequent transformation — is so important.

The declaration issued by the Conference, which highlights the crucial role of the United Nations in Afghanistan, is also important. During meetings on the sidelines of the Conference, the Secretary-General underscored the three future priorities of the United Nations: first, to provide security and development assistance; secondly, to promote and support an inclusive reconciliation process led by Afghans and based on dialogue and consensus; and, thirdly, to continue to promote human rights, in particular the rights of women and children.

The United Nations is committed to the Government and people of Afghanistan for the long term. We have supported the Afghan population for more than half a century. We will remain in Afghanistan well beyond 2014, for as long as Afghans need us.

With regard to major meetings on Afghanistan since the latest Council deliberations, the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia launched the Istanbul Process. The 13 participating countries reaffirmed their previous commitments, including with regard to the country's territorial integrity. They also announced joint principles to guide their support for a secure, stable and peaceful Afghanistan.

The Istanbul Process has put in place a follow-up framework based on concrete confidence-building measures in response to the crucial challenges facing Afghanistan and a large part of the region in the security, political and economic areas. Those challenges include the threat posed by terrorism and drug trafficking, as well as the need for peace and to strengthen trade links. We look forward to the concept paper to be presented by Afghanistan early next year ahead of the Kabul ministerial conference to be held in July 2012, which will be an additional sign of the taking on of greater responsibility of the Process for the future by national authorities.

(*spoke in English*)

Politically, there have also been a number of important steps forwards since our last debate (see S/PV.6625). At the traditional Loya Jirga in November, approximately 40 working groups made up of representatives from every province debated the future of the High Peace Council and of dialogue itself. They concluded that there was no alternative to peace, reaffirmed the Council's mandate and recommended, wisely, that dialogue take place with interlocutors who are known, verifiable, can take responsibility and be held accountable, and respect the rights and aspirations of all Afghans, especially women.

As a result of the assassination of Professor Rabbani, the Jirga requested the Government to appoint a new chairperson to lead the High Peace Council in his stead.

There was a clear reaffirmation from both the Loya Jirga and the Bonn Conference outcomes of the

commitment to pursuing a peace process, but next steps remain to be defined.

In another positive development, with a working quorum achieved on 8 October, the lower house of parliament — the Wolesi Jirga — has now resumed its legislative work. The orderly resolution of the year-long dispute over election results points to a growing respect for institutions, processes and lawful procedures.

With parliament's approval, in mid-October, of the supplemental budget to recapitalize Kabul Bank, a positive domino effect has also had the result of dissolving a major blockage within the development agenda. Indeed, in November, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Government concluded negotiations on a new IMF programme. That has enabled international donors, first, to re-engage in support of current development programmes through the JCMB process, with two Board meetings held in quick succession to approve nine new national priority programmes; and secondly, at Bonn, to commit to longer-term development cooperation, including a reconfirmation of commitments to channel more aid through the Government budget.

Through that revitalization of the Kabul process and the reconfirmation of aid effectiveness mechanisms, the Afghan Government will be better positioned to meet its own commitments to improved governance and the rule of law, greater fiscal accountability and enhanced delivery.

In terms of counter-narcotics, the 2011 Afghan Opium Survey, which was released in October, revealed an increase in poppy cultivation and in the expected production of opium this year. However, during the past month two important steps were taken at the regional level, which is indeed the level at which this issue must be fought. Under the triangular initiative sponsored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the ministers for counter-narcotics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan met to sign a declaration to strengthen joint planning and operational capacities. The following week, UNODC launched its 2011-2014 regional programme to enhance cooperation with all the countries of the region, especially with regard to information sharing.

In terms of the transition of security responsibilities, which is a key component of the transformative process, I saw for myself on my recent visit to Afghanistan that this is proceeding apace. As the Council is aware, at the end of November President Karzai approved the second tranche of areas to be handed over. But there is no room for complacency. For the transition to be sustainable, security has to be linked to development and the Kabul process. The Afghan people must see tangible improvements to their daily lives, especially in terms of economic opportunities. It is therefore more urgent than ever before that the civilian side of transition proceed equally strongly and briskly. Thus Bonn has come at a crucial time for this process to gain momentum. More specific commitments from the international community will be expected at next year's conference in Tokyo.

Also noteworthy, and promising if sustained, are recent apparent signs of a relative decline in the number of security incidents as we at the United Nations record them. As of today, this year there has been a 21 per cent rise in incidents, as compared to 2010, but that was mainly due to the elevated number of incidents in the early part of the year. In September, October and November, the number of incidents fell, as compared to the previous three months. It also fell in comparison to the same period in 2010 — although we must remember that parliamentary elections in September last year greatly skewed the figures for that month.

This is good news in a sector that has had little positive to report for a very long time. Nevertheless, we should not deceive ourselves. We have again witnessed large-scale attacks over recent weeks. We must continue to exercise great caution and vigilance as the volatile security situation continues to impact the work of the United Nations in Afghanistan, constraining operational access and perpetuating high levels of risk for our staff, as well as for the Afghan population.

We still have a long way to go with our work, as the title of a recently released UNAMA human rights report on the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women tells us. The rights of women and of detainees are highlighted in this report. We will continue to pursue such reviews and to encourage and support Afghan civil society to play a similar role and to make Afghan voices heard.

Regrettably, we also have a long way to go on the protection of civilians. Civilian casualties remain at

high levels, with nearly 800 civilian deaths over the last three-month period. Dozens of innocent worshippers were killed on a single day in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif on 6 December — an important religious day of commemoration. Such attacks deserve the strong condemnation they have received from the widest range of voices, both inside and outside Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Afghans have become all too familiar with such pain and hardship. We must keep our eye on the pressing humanitarian concerns that continue to afflict this country.

The drought this year has had a devastating impact, particularly in the north and the west, so much so that the Emergency Relief Coordinator increased this year's consolidated appeal by $129 million — nearly 30 per cent — to respond, under the leadership of the Afghan Government, to the resulting needs. Next year's appeal, which was launched last week, reminds us of the importance of bridging the gap between humanitarian interventions and development to get at the underlying structural problems, which can prevent many of the natural disasters we see recurring year in, year out. In this area, too, the Government is taking a strong leadership position and will need our support as part of our commitment to long-term engagement.

With a clear message of support from the international community and the Afghan Government in Bonn and Istanbul for the crucial role of the United Nations in Afghanistan, it is time to look again at that role and refocus our mandate, adjusting it to the evolving situation on the ground. To this end, and in line with the Council's instructions and the call from the Government earlier this year to the Secretary-General, the process of reviewing UNAMA's mandated activities and of United Nations support in Afghanistan, led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, is under way. I am pleased to report that during my visit to Kabul we officially launched the review process, together with Foreign Minister Rassoul, in the presence of other key ministers, including Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin, who is the Afghan Government's focal point for the review. I wish to thank him for his leadership.

An inter-agency team appointed by the Secretary-General is working under the terms of reference that were widely consulted and agreed with Council members and the Afghan Government, as well as with key partners and stakeholders. The team returned from Afghanistan yesterday. They held extensive consultations with a wide range of interlocutors in New York before deployment and during their three-week stay in Afghanistan. The team will now conduct a series of debriefings before compiling their findings and recommendations, which will aim to inform the Council's discussions related to the mandate renewal in March 2012.

I also wish to inform the Council that the planned and smooth process of succession in UNAMA's senior leadership is under way. Mr. Staffan de Mistura, who successfully led the Mission through a very tumultuous period, completed his service as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on 14 December to take up a position within his Government. I expressed the deep appreciation and gratitude of the Secretary-General and of myself for Mr. De Mistura's professionalism and dedication during his tenure. We wish him well in the next step in his very distinguished career.

I am pleased to introduce Mr. Jan Kubiš, whom many of you already know, who has been appointed by the Secretary-General as the next Special Representative and Head of UNAMA. Mr. Kubiš is an accomplished and successful diplomat and politician. He has had a long and high-profile career, including as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia and as Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, prior to heading the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, where he is currently serving until his deployment to UNAMA on 16 January. We wish him well as well in his most challenging task and request the Council's understanding and full support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing. I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin.

Mr. Ludin (Afghanistan): It is an honour to have the opportunity to address the Security Council of the United Nations for the first time. I convey the gratitude of the Afghan people to all Council members, and the countries they represent, for their commitment to a peaceful Afghanistan, and for maintaining a focus on the evolving situation in my country.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his useful and comprehensive briefing and for spending an extended period of time in Afghanistan on his recent visit. It was a pleasure to join him, and Mr. Heitman, who is also present here, in Kabul recently for the

launch of the work of the mandate review team for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

The year 2011 has been a year of significant milestones for Afghanistan, and we Afghans are proud to have been successful in most of the steps we have taken in partnership with the international community. Of course, as in the years before, every bit of our achievements has come at a price. Terrorism remains a strong threat, and Afghans have continued to make huge sacrifices for the vision of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan. However, no threat or demand for sacrifice will deter us from achieving our vision, and we truly appreciate the crucial help of our international friends and partners in this historic struggle.

Having always aspired to achieve self-reliance, this past year we finally took the crucial step of beginning the transition process, which will see Afghanistan's National Security Forces take full responsibility for security in the country by the end of 2014. With the implementation of the second tranche of transition, announced last month by His Excellency President Hamid Karzai, Afghan forces are taking charge of security for over fifty percent of the country's population.

Allow me to emphasize that for the Afghan people, transition is not an imposed deadline or a mere operational benchmark. Transition is truly the manifestation of our determination to succeed and to stand on our own feet. It is the guiding framework for all our efforts, and in a fundamental sense it is the ultimate goal of the partnership we Afghans are blessed to have had with the international community for the past ten years.

Transition, however, is not just about security. As we move to take full responsibility for defending our country and securing the lives of our people, we are also assuming greater ownership of affairs on the civilian front, including the political process and the development agenda. Therefore, to make transition meaningful and to build the capacity of our security forces, we are redoubling our efforts to take the peace process forward, improve governance, fight corruption and build the requisite capacities of our Government institutions to carry out their sovereign functions effectively and transparently.

Speaking of the political solution, I wish to reassure the Council that the Afghan Government remains committed to the Afghan-led peace effort that is aimed at reconciling members of the armed opposition and enabling them to live a peaceful life in society. The Council is aware that, in recent months, our peace efforts have faced a number of setbacks, notably the tragic assassination of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, former President of Afghanistan and Chairman of the High Peace Council. Nonetheless, at the consultative Loya Jirga held last month in Kabul, the Afghan people unanimously reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process, giving it renewed impetus. The national gathering conveyed the Afghan people's desire for the continuation of an inclusive Afghan-led national reconciliation and reintegration process.

Through the peace process, we will continue to reach out to the armed opposition and reconcile with those willing to renounce violence, break ties with terrorist organizations and live peaceful lives under the Constitution. We believe that the process may benefit from the establishment of an office, within or outside Afghanistan, which could facilitate formal talks between the relevant Afghan authorities and representatives of the armed opposition, including the Taliban. Furthermore, we will continue to rely on support from regional countries, in particular the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, without whose support our peace efforts will not produce the desired results.

The role of the region surrounding Afghanistan remains central to the peaceful and prosperous future that we Afghans envision for our country. The common threats that we share, including the menaces of terrorism, narcotics and so on, will not be defeated, nor will peace in Afghanistan ever be achieved, in the absence of constructive, results-oriented cooperation at the regional level. Therefore, over the past 10 years, we in Afghanistan have placed regional cooperation at the heart of our vision for the future and we will continue to do so in the years to come.

Thanks to the leadership of the brotherly Republic of Turkey, the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia, held early in November, represented a visionary step forward towards cooperation and confidence-building across the region. We are both hopeful and optimistic that the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable

Afghanistan will help to bring about a new regional environment that is characterized by cooperation, integration, confidence and shared efforts to achieve security and prosperity. That vision has eluded us for far too long. We will follow up the Istanbul Conference with another ministerial-level conference, to be held in Kabul in June 2012, the preparation of which has already begun in earnest.

As the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community evolves during and after the transition phase, Afghans need reassurance that our friends in the region and beyond will continue to support our progress towards peace, stability, prosperity and democracy. Thankfully, that reassurance was given, in very strong terms, two weeks ago in Germany, where over a hundred countries and international organizations gathered for the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn. I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany, Afghanistan's long-standing friend and partner, for hosting that historic conference.

The true significance of the Bonn Conference was that it reflected a crucial consensus on the international level to support a peaceful, sovereign and prosperous future for Afghanistan. That consensus was expressed in strong language of support and commitment, particularly in setting out the concept of the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024 as a solid basis for the international community's enduring engagement and support beyond transition.

The Conference also reaffirmed the Kabul Process as the framework for the international community's cooperation with Afghanistan as we continue to transform our country from a war-dependent to a self-reliant economy. In that context, we look forward to the Tokyo Conference, to be held in July next year, as an opportunity to focus on Afghanistan's future economic agenda. I thank our Japanese friends for their friendship and for organizing that crucial conference.

If the Bonn Conference was a demonstration of consensus at the international level, the consultative Loya Jirga, held from 16 to 19 November in Kabul, was its mirror image within Afghanistan, reflecting the unanimous desire of the Afghan people for partnership and engagement with the international community. More than 2,000 Afghan representatives from all segments of society and all corners of the country came together and, in a historic manifestation of democratic will, resoundingly affirmed the Afghan Government's efforts to forge long-term, strategic partnerships with the United States and other countries within and outside the region.

In that context, we have finalized a strategic partnership agreement with our old and historic friend, the Republic of India, and are in the process of negotiating similar agreements with our other friends and partners, based on the principles of mutual respect and the fundamental equality of sovereign nations. Those partnerships will be the building blocks of Afghanistan's future relations with the international community. They cannot, and will not, represent a threat to any other country in the region or beyond.

As we move forward, the role of the United Nations will remain crucial to Afghanistan's partnership with the international community. We expect that the ongoing review of the UNAMA mandate will ensure a more coherent and responsive United Nations role in Afghanistan. In that context, I welcome the recent visit of the review team to Afghanistan. I look forward to continued dialogue between Afghanistan, in Kabul and in New York, and the United Nations in the context of the review, which should reinforce the principles of Afghan ownership and leadership through the transition and beyond.

Speaking of the United Nations, I would have requested Under-Secretary-General Ladsous to convey to Mr. Staffan de Mistura — but since Mr. De Mistura is present via videoconference, may I convey directly to Mr. De Mistura the deep gratitude and appreciation of the Afghan people for his dedicated service and excellent leadership of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We thank him for all he has done. I personally have enjoyed working with Mr. De Mistura and wish him every success in his future endeavours. I also take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. His distinguished career, and the trust invested in him by the Secretary-General, assures us of the continued effective leadership of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

As we meet today, at the end of the tenth year of what has been a truly historic collaboration between the Afghan people and the international community,

allow me to reaffirm Afghanistan's unwavering determination to achieve a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future in close partnership with the world. Of course, we have recorded tremendous achievements together, and we are all aware of the challenges that lie ahead and the imperatives for continued commitment and cooperation.

Today, with the tremendous success of the Bonn Conference fresh in our minds, I am here to express appreciation for the international community's recommitment to Afghanistan's future, as expressed in Bonn earlier this month. I also thank the Council for standing behind the Conference's conclusions. As Afghanistan moves from transition to the transformation decade, the Council's guidance and the international community's commitment remain as crucial to our future as ever before.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Staffan de Mistura, who is participating in today's meeting by videoconference from Rome.

Mr. De Mistura: I want, as is my custom, to make only three points and one conclusion. The first point is a warm thanks to the Council for allowing me not to miss this meeting of the Security Council. I would have loved to be there today in order to present my last report to the Council in my capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and, frankly, to thank all the members of the Council warmly and shake their hands, one by one, in gratitude for what they have done in supporting the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and me during the past two years. My colleagues and I never felt for a single moment during that time that we were not supported and guided by the Council.

I leave UNAMA in excellent hands, as the Council will see. Mr. Ján Kubiš is perfectly suited for doing even better than has been done so far. He comes with the right spirit, enthusiasm and background. I feel that, with the Council's help and the Secretary-General's guidance, we will be able to continue doing what UNAMA has been trying to do for the past two years and to respond to Afghans' needs. We heard it from Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin: the most important thing for Afghans is respect for their dignity and sovereignty while at the same time understanding their need for a partnership, and a long-lasting one.

What has been done so far, I think, with the Council's guidance and support, is to help the democratic process. There is now a parliament; there are 69 women in parliament; the parliament is working; and preparations are being made for future elections when the time comes for them. There is support for Afghan institutions, such as the Independent Electoral Commission. A regional process that has started through the Istanbul Process, and we will see those new meetings taking place next year. We have constant reminders from the human rights side of the United Nations concerning human rights for women, for civilian casualties, for those in detention, and for children. And there is a process, albeit nascent and still insufficient, for political reconciliation. But we do have the Salaam Support Group from UNAMA that will be with Mr. Kubiš, supporting any process that Afghans want to lead. And we have been supporting the transition, which is moving forward in the right direction.

I also take this opportunity to thank the NATO International Security Assistance Force, European Union representatives and representatives of the regional bodies for the excellent cooperation we have had during the past two years. We have different agendas and sometimes a different focus, but we have all worked in the same direction and towards the same goals. I welcome the review. Every opportunity for revisiting what we are trying to do and should be doing in the future — as can be seen from the Mission outlined in the coming report — becomes an opportunity for us to better serve Afghans and be more effective vis-à-vis the Security Council.

Last but not least is the aspect of aid coherence, which, with the establishment of the Joint Coordination Board, has enabled UNAMA, in partnership with Afghan authorities, to have a body that can move forward on what we call the Kabul process. The Conferences in London, Kabul, Lisbon, Istanbul and, most recently, in Bonn have all been opportunities where, in serving the United Nations, I have had the privilege of seeing the process and progress moving in a good direction for Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I have had moments of great satisfaction at seeing Afghan achievements moving in the right direction. We have had setbacks and terribly sad moments, especially, as can be imagined, when my colleagues and friends died in Mazar-e-Sharif. But never have we felt alone, because the Afghans were with us, showing us the way through their own determination and resilience, and because the Council

and the Secretary-General were always there supporting us. That is why I want to thank the Council warmly and why I am so happy I could be with everyone, even from a long distance, on this occasion.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like, at the outset, to acknowledge the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin here in the Chamber. We thank him very much for joining us today and for his remarks. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his comprehensive briefing. Germany thanks Mr. Staffan de Mistura wholeheartedly for his enormous contribution to United Nations support for Afghanistan and for his personal dedication in one of the most challenging positions that the Organization has to offer. The new Italian Government's choice of Mr. De Mistura for his important new position there is ample proof of his outstanding qualities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and welcome the incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and the new head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Mr. Ján Kubiš. My delegation wishes to congratulate him on his new position and assure him of the full support of the German Government. His vast political experience will serve the United Nations Mission very well. I would also like to assure him of the strong support of my country and, I assume, of the Council, for which Afghanistan is a high priority, as has been proven by the high degree of consensus displayed over time.

Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Kubiš is going to Kabul at yet another defining moment in modern Afghan history, only days after the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn on 5 December, which, as Mr. Ludin said, was a historic milestone. Ten years after the first conference, in St. Petersburg, Afghanistan is on its way to full sovereignty again. The transition is starting to show its first results. As announced by President Karzai, soon more than 50 per cent of Afghan territory will be considered to be transition areas. By 2014 the Afghan Security Forces will have full responsibility for Afghanistan's security.

The truly remarkable message from Bonn is clear: the international community renews its partnership with Afghanistan and defines a clear and reliable long-term perspective, based on firm mutual commitments. For its part of the agreement, the Afghan Government commits to continued progress in all key areas, such as democracy, human rights and governance, and reaffirms its international obligations in that regard. More generally, the so-called transformation decade of 2015-2024 emphasizes a strategic consensus. The international community stands by Afghanistan. We will make sure that the important achievements over the past decade will not be reversed and that much-needed reforms and capacity-building will remain priorities, for the benefit of all Afghans. Terrorists must not be allowed to find a safe haven in Afghanistan again.

In all of that, sustainability, including fiscal sustainability, is a key concern. One example is that the Afghan Security forces have almost reached their target size. The focus must now be on further qualification and empowerment of lasting Afghan-owned structures.

Bonn also underlined the international support for a political solution. The permanent stabilization of Afghanistan requires an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process that combines the legitimate interests of all groups within Afghan society, including those Taliban who want to break with their past. In that context, Afghanistan and the world community have defined seven clear principles for such a process, showing unequivocally that peace cannot be had at any price. However, participants were very clear that the outcome of a peace and reconciliation process based on those principles needed to be respected and supported by the region. Regional support remains essential — and a functional relationship with its closest neighbour, Pakistan, even more so. The German delegation is fully supportive of the new Istanbul Process to gradually build and renew trust and confidence in the region.

Finally, the central role of the United Nations in Afghanistan found much support and appreciation in Bonn. While we are optimizing the United Nations footprint in view of transition, Germany shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General at the Conference that the United Nations was active in Afghanistan well before 2001, and will be needed in Afghanistan long after 2014.

As my delegation has repeatedly said in this Chamber, it is our common responsibility to ensure, in the best possible way, the safety and security of United Nations personnel, working under significant risks and

at the cost of personal sacrifice. Germany condemns in the strongest of terms the attack against the United Nations compound in Kandahar in late October and, once more, expresses its sincere condolences. Reminded by the report presented today, we strongly call for respect for the humanitarian space in which those who come to help the most vulnerable operate.

Before concluding, I wish to offer some remarks on security. We remain concerned by the overall volatility and the continued high level of violence. The shocking Ashura attacks against innocent worshippers this month are the latest example. However, despite an increase in the visibility of attacks, the overall security situation shows clear signs of stabilization. We believe that a negative trend might have been halted. While transition progresses, the international engagement needs adaptation. As one element of the transformation of the provincial reconstruction teams before they are phased out, Germany has decided to place its team under civilian leadership, the Faizabad team being the first last week.

Let me end by underlining once more the gratitude of the German Government for its Afghan partners, particularly President Karzai, Foreign Minister Rassoul, Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin and Ambassador Tanin here in New York, for their outstanding cooperation in preparation for the Bonn Conference. Germany highly values its close friendship with Afghanistan and will continue to exert influence in support of the bright future Afghanistan deserves.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, allow me to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous, Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin and former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura. We especially thank Mr. De Mistura for his excellent work and for the cooperation we had from him during our term in the Council.

It is encouraging to learn that the year-long post-electoral disagreement has been overcome and that the National Assembly is in session again. Steps made towards the resolution of the Kabul Bank issue, the nominations of the heads of the National Directorate of Security and the Central Bank and a member of the Independent Commission for the Supervision of the Implementation of the Constitution are signs of encouragement. However, during the reporting period, the violence in Afghanistan increased considerably, and was characterized by high-profile assassinations. Unfortunately, that has had challenging impacts on the wider reconciliation process. Local stakeholders and the international community should therefore continue to support the process which, in our view, is of crucial importance for the future of the country. The dedication that we heard today is certainly encouraging.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply concerned about the continued suffering of civilians. We have learned that civilian deaths increased by 5 per cent during the reporting period as compared to 2010. We therefore reiterate our position that reconciliation is the only way for Afghanistan to stop the suffering of civilians.

With regard to security developments, we reiterate our strong concern that in 2011 the average number of monthly security-related incidents has increased by 21 per cent as compared to 2010. But we are encouraged by the transition of security responsibilities to Afghan control, particularly with the efficiency of its second phase which, once accomplished, will cover over half of Afghanistan's population.

We fully share the view of many stakeholders in Afghanistan that, in addition to the security gains, we must pay strong attention to the socio-economic aspects. We commend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in its role in ensuring the centrality of the Government in development. The agreement reached during the trilateral meeting between Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan, which resulted in the creation of a cooperative mechanism for investigating Professor Rabbani's murder, is an encouraging development in Afghanistan's relationship with two of its neighbours.

As we have always emphasized, regional cooperation is of crucial importance for the stability of the peace and prosperity of Afghanistan. We therefore welcome and commend every step taken towards that goal, including the organization by the Republic of Turkey of the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan, which was held on 2 November. We hope that the Istanbul Process will help to increase regional cooperation and confidence-building. We strongly support the organization and outcome of the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn on 5 December, which focused on the commitment to

assist Afghanistan in and after the transition and to reinforce the Kabul Process.

With regard to human rights, we condemn the torture of conflict-related detainees in Afghan prisons. It is of great concern that between 35 and 46 per cent of prisoners have been tortured, as it implies that torture is systematic. We commend UNAMA's work on that important issue. We also commend the United Nations for its continued support for the Afghan Government in its implementation of the action plan on the prevention of child recruitment and grave violations committed against children.

With regard to the implementation of the Kabul process and aid coherence, we are glad to learn that the process has advanced and that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Government of Afghanistan have successfully concluded negotiations on the IMF programme for Afghanistan, which we hope will improve economic growth, human development and public service delivery.

With regard to the development of humanitarian assistance, we strongly support the addition of seven new areas to the current set of priorities — for example, capacity development, youth, population issues, the reintegration of returnees and natural resource management — in the United Nations development assistance framework.

With that in mind, Bosnia and Herzegovina reiterates its concern over the situation of internally displaced persons in the country. We call upon the international community and Afghan authorities to provide vulnerable populations with the necessary support to facilitate their integration.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura and to the staff of UNAMA for their valuable work aimed at building peace and stability in Afghanistan. Bosnia and Herzegovina will always stand by the Afghan people and is ready to continue to provide its concrete and tangible support to peace and stability in the country by participating in international efforts to that end.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank Mr. Hervé Ladsous and Mr. Staffan de Mistura for their briefings. I also welcome Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Jawed Ludin, whom I also thank for his briefing. Allow me to make the following remarks.

We would like to reiterate our concern over the continued prevalence of difficult security conditions through Afghanistan, which is the main source of concern for Afghans and the international community. We also condemn the civilian casualties and the attacks that have targeted Afghan and international forces and staff of the United Nations and other international organizations, particularly humanitarian organizations. We call upon all parties to fully abide by the rules of international humanitarian law.

Lebanon is convinced that a successful solution for Afghanistan requires two basic elements.

The first is national reconciliation among all sectors of Afghan society, because the future and the destiny of the Afghan people will depend upon coexistence and shared governance and responsibilities. Experience has proven that eliminating any sector of society is impossible and that diversity within the framework of national unity is the genuine formula for peace. Therefore, my country calls for successful confidence-building measures among the relevant stakeholders in order to reinvigorate dialogue and reconciliation, especially following the assassination of the former President and head of the High Peace Council, Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Secondly, strengthened bilateral and multilateral relations between Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries, based upon good-neighbourliness and mutual trust for the sovereignty and independence of States, would contribute towards ensuring sustainable security and stability of Afghanistan and its surrounding countries, as well as economic integration. It would also help to put an end to the two scourges of the drug trade and terrorism.

On the other hand, in the light of the Secretary-General's report, Lebanon welcomes the efforts made to improve socio-economic development, enhance transparency, combat corruption and to eliminate illiteracy, in particular among Afghan women. Such efforts will facilitate realization of the requirements of a modern, democratic State and long-term stability.

However, my country is concerned by the reports of widespread mistreatment and torture of detainees and the exploitation and increasing incidence of killing and maiming of children. We call upon the United

Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan to continue to exert its utmost effort to end those violations.

Lebanon welcomes what was agreed upon at the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan, which was held on 2 November and which resulted in the adoption of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan. The Istanbul Conference affirmed the active, regional vision that forms the basis for enhanced cooperation in the region on many issues, especially with regard to security.

We also welcome the commitments made by the international community and the Afghan Government in the Bonn Conference held at the beginning of the month, aimed at the peace process, regional cooperation, governance, security and development.

It is important for the international community to continue to support Afghanistan after completion of the transfer of security responsibilities to Afghan authorities in 2014 in a manner that will guarantee Afghanistan's territorial integrity and independence while continuing to strengthen its capabilities and ensure prosperity.

In conclusion, Lebanon would like to express its genuine appreciation for the efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura and the rest of the United Nations staff who have worked under extremely difficult conditions to serve Afghanistan. Mr. De Mistura had previously served in Lebanon and Iraq and has demonstrated the same level of dedication and effort in his service to achieve the laudable objectives of the United Nations. We wish him every success in his new duties. We also wish his successor, Mr. Ján Kubiš, every success.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Hervé Ladsous for his concise and comprehensive briefing of the Council on the situation in Afghanistan and on the prospects for the transition process. I welcome Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and thank him for his analysis today. A special welcome goes to our friend Staffan de Mistura. I would like to praise his work, because his competence, his commitment and the personal dedication he has shown deserve all our recognition and gratitude. He will assume new responsibilities in his Government, and we wish him the best.

We are heartened by the progress of the transition process towards Afghan responsibility and leadership with respect to security. There has been a significant broadening of the areas where work is under way to enable the Afghan forces to assume control functions as 2014 approaches. It is essential to make firm progress in the transition to Afghan responsibility in security matters within the agreed timetable. Here, the endeavours of the International Security Assistance Force and the NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan constitute an important contribution to increase the capacity and professionalism of the Afghan police and security forces.

Colombia again acknowledges of the contribution of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to the stabilization and democratization process and its determination to work in coordination with the Government to establish the bases for sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan.

In the framework of its mandate, UNAMA must continue to focus its efforts on critical aspects to facilitate the political process for peace and reconciliation, security, governance, economic development and regional cooperation. The United Nations must continue its central role in coordinating international efforts with the national authorities to ensure consistency with the identified priorities for Afghanistan and to avoid duplication of efforts.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the scope of the transition process must be broadened. It must be acknowledged that the progress in security could be affected by weaknesses in socio-economic development, governance and rule of law. It is therefore imperative to maintain a balanced focus that takes into account not only security, but also improving the living conditions of the Afghan people.

Unfortunately, violence remains one of the main factors affecting the Afghan people. Although the number of security incidents has declined, we are concerned by the increased number of civilian victims and of humanitarian needs. We reiterate our call on all parties to the conflict to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights and to take all measures necessary to ensure the protection of civilians. Selective killings and the use of improvised explosive devices do not contribute to the process of dialogue and reconciliation. It is important that all

parties to show clear signs of commitment to the process to which the Afghan Government is committed.

In the recent conference held in Bonn, referred to by my colleagues and the speakers, the international community renewed its resolve to work for a stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. We welcome the many commitments reached on issues of governance, security, the peace process, economic development and regional cooperation. We agree that an inclusive peace and reconciliation process must be based on principles of Afghan leadership and ownership, respect for the sovereignty and unity of Afghanistan, respect for the Constitution and the rejection of violence and terrorism.

Here, regional cooperation is of vital importance. We emphasize the many bilateral and subregional initiatives to resolve in a friendly fashion the various humanitarian and security problems besetting Afghanistan and its neighbours.

The consensus on deepening and broadening the relation between Afghanistan and the international community, which will guide the 2015-2024 Transformation Decade adopted in Bonn, must contribute to strengthening the State and its ability to meet the aspirations and needs of its people. The international commitment towards Afghanistan in the medium- and long-term should include the strengthening of institutions, the creation of jobs and economic opportunities and both the implementation of justice and access to it. A sustainable transition requires a State structure capable of guaranteeing governability and economic stability at both the regional and the national levels. Those are the fundamental elements to guarantee a definitive transition, which should be the goal of international cooperation in Afghanistan.

Lastly, I would like to welcome to Mr. Ján Kubiš, to whom we offer all our support as he assumes his new duties.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin to the Council today and to thank him for sharing his views with us. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing this morning.

Let me take a moment to express our deep gratitude to outgoing Special Representative Staffan de Mistura for his dedicated service and able leadership in Afghanistan. Mr. De Mistura will be missed. We are indebted to him and his staff for the important work done under considerable hardship for the benefit of the Afghan people on behalf of all Member States. I would also like to welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Ján Kubiš as the next Special Representative for Afghanistan. Mr. Kubiš has a distinguished record in international affairs and we assure him of the full support of the United States.

Today, I would like to discuss how the Government of Afghanistan is increasingly exercising its sovereign authority. I would also like to say a few words about the United States-Afghan bilateral relationship and how the work of the international community has affected the lives of average Afghans.

In the past few months, we saw noteworthy Afghan leadership in the establishment of the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation and in chairing the Bonn Conference. We support the Istanbul Process and note the important role of the United Nations in backing regional efforts to implement the commitments and confidence-building measures agreed to in Istanbul. In Bonn, 86 countries and 15 international organizations affirmed their commitments to help Afghanistan set out a blueprint for a transformation decade in post-transition Afghanistan. We applaud the international community's resolve to help Afghanistan secure the gains of the past 10 years and to make transition irreversible. It is especially important that, in both Istanbul and Bonn, the region and the broader international community pledged their support to Afghan-led reconciliation that is inclusive and represents the legitimate interests of all the people of Afghanistan, regardless of gender or social status. The international community also underscored that reconciliation must include the reaffirmation of a sovereign, stable and united Afghanistan, the renunciation of violence, the breaking of ties to international terrorism, and respect for the Afghan constitution.

As we look towards the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012, the international community will continue efforts to support the Afghan people as they begin the second tranche of a security transition. The NATO summit and the foreign ministers' meeting to be held in Tokyo in July will be important

opportunities to review progress and clarify plans for supporting Afghanistan into the transformation decade.

From a bilateral perspective, we look forward to further progress on the United States-Afghan strategic partnership document. The post-2014 United States presence will be determined in close consultation with the Afghan Government, but, to make two points clear in advance, the United States is not seeking permanent military bases in Afghanistan, and our strategic partnership is not aimed at any of Afghanistan's neighbours.

As we look forward, let us not forget that much has already been accomplished to help improve the lives of Afghan citizens. The recent release of the Afghanistan mortality survey shows very encouraging signs about the work of the World Health Organization, the United States Agency for International Development and other international partners. More children are living past their fifth birthday than at any time in the past. The percentage of women seeking medical care and advice for their newborns increased from 16 to 60 per cent between 2003 and 2010. Improved maternal health has led to a decline in female adult mortality of about one-third over the past decade. Household living standards have improved, with more Afghan families reporting access to clean water and electricity and to better sanitation facilities. Life expectancy at birth has increased to 62. The death rate among men aged 15 to 59 has approximately been halved over the past 10 years. With donor support, most Afghans now live within two hours' walking distance from a health facility.

We look forward to the comprehensive review of the work of the United Nations in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We want to continue to improve and consolidate service delivery from all United Nations agencies in Afghanistan and to strengthen UNAMA's support for the country through transition and beyond. UNAMA's role will continue to evolve as Afghan ownership increases, but there can be no doubt of the continuing importance of the work of the United Nations. We welcome Special Representative Kubiš's input on his priorities and vision for the mission and look forward to discussions on how the international community can best support UNAMA.

During the past few months, Afghanistan has demonstrated its vision for the nation's future as a stable country ready to move from transition to transformation and to contribute to peace and stability in the region. The United States remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in continuing our partnership through 2014 and beyond.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I would like to join others in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, and to thank him very much for his comprehensive statement. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2011/772*). We are very appreciative of the briefings by Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and Mr. Staffan de Mistura. I would also like to join others in appreciating all the work that Mr. De Mistura has done in Afghanistan and to congratulate him on his new appointment as undersecretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in his country.

We are pleased that the Bonn Conference was well attended. We would like to congratulate Afghanistan for its outstanding chairmanship and to thank Germany for hosting that important Conference. Coming close on the heels of the Istanbul Conference, which provided new and better regional cooperation, the Bonn Conference provided an opportunity to comprehensively review developments in Afghanistan during the past decade and to chart the collective vision of the international community for the future.

The outcome, as embodied in the Bonn Conference conclusions, is an expression of the international community's determination and political commitment to sustained long-term engagement with Afghanistan. To realize that vision, we need to back up our commitments with more resources and actions. If the Afghan Government assumes full ownership, it also needs support for economic development. We hope that the upcoming conferences in 2012 — the Chicago conference on security in May, the Kabul conference on regional cooperation in June and the Tokyo conference on development in July — will ensure the continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan's growth.

Afghanistan today faces at least four deficits, primarily with respect to security, governance, development and investment. Afghanistan will require enormous assistance for a long time if it is to adequately address those four deficits. There is real danger that, as international forces withdraw from a

combat role and in numbers, there will be a transition recession, namely, that attention and aid will decline just when Afghan Government security demands increase. It is important that we draw the right lessons from our past mistakes. We should not let Afghanistan slip back. We need to avert the possibility that Afghanistan could be let down or made to feel abandoned by a withdrawal of assistance, both in terms of quantity and in quality post-2014. Afghanistan's security can only be ensured through non-interference in its internal affairs.

Concerted international and regional efforts are imperative for laying the foundations of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. It is important that the ongoing transition remain Afghan-owned and that it be carried out in a systematic manner, taking into account the realities on the ground. The transition must be multifaceted and should ensure the protection and promotion of the human rights of all Afghans and lead to strengthening of the Afghan State and its institutions.

First and foremost, Afghanistan needs assistance and support to build its capacity to tackle the critical challenges of terrorism, including suicide terrorism, the religious extremism that fuels it and the drug trafficking that sustains it. We are seriously concerned that the insurgency remains resilient. There has been no let-up in terrorist violence, and the security gains are still tenuous. Besides the targeting of high-profile political and public figures, innocent civilians have been repeatedly targeted by the Taliban, even on solemn and auspicious occasions.

As we have repeatedly highlighted, terrorism finds sustenance and support from a dangerous osmosis of ideologies, ambitions, training and operations among the syndicates of terrorism in the region, with suicide terrorism as its main technique and targets not limited to Afghanistan. We need concerted action to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and other terrorist and extremist groups, operating mainly from outside Afghanistan's borders. The groups are ideologically and operationally fused, and their bonds have strengthened over the years. We need resolute determination and political will to deal firmly with safe havens for terrorist groups outside Afghanistan's borders in the region.

Our vision for the period of transition must also take into account the conditions on the ground and the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces to preserve the sovereignty, independence and integrity of the nation. We support further strengthening of the Afghan National Security Forces, which must go hand in hand with strengthening their training and equipping and with financing and developing their capabilities beyond the transition period.

In addition to security, we also need concomitant progress on the development front. That requires market access, foreign investment and a coherent international economic strategy for Afghanistan. It also implies greater coordination and further streamlining of the international community's development-related efforts, including aligning assistance with Afghanistan national priorities.

India has age-old historical, cultural, civilizational and economic ties with neighbouring Afghanistan. During the past decade our relationship has been renewed and consolidated by India's contribution to the rebuilding and reconstruction of Afghanistan. India fully supports a genuinely Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-driven peace and reconciliation process — as opposed to an internationally led process — accompanied by an inclusive political process and intra-Afghan dialogue with those who renounce violence, cut off ties to terrorist groups, abide by the Afghan Constitution and are committed to the protection of human rights, including the rights of women.

India believes in a strong, independent, sovereign, stable, united, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan, at peace with itself and its neighbours. Recent history has shown that an end to Afghanistan's suffering requires an end to external interference in its internal affairs. India has pledged up to $2 billion in development and humanitarian assistance and signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with Afghanistan in October, looking at 2014 and beyond. The agreement creates an institutional framework for our future cooperation in the fields of political and security issues, trade and economy, capacity-building and education and social, cultural, civil society and people-to-people relations.

We offer our growing market to Afghanistan's products. Last month, India announced the virtual elimination of sensitive lists affecting exports from all

least developed countries in the South Asian region to India. India is assisting Afghanistan in building an agricultural university to tap the potential of agriculture in Afghanistan. We have extended our assistance to Afghanistan for capacity-building and increased the number of civil scholarships offered to Afghanistan, so as to enable more students from Afghanistan to get the requisite training in art, culture, technology and other areas in order to further the process of nation-building in Afghanistan.

We are also prepared to make long-term investments in Afghanistan. Indian companies are willing to invest up to $10 billion in the mining sector and in setting up a steel plant and related infrastructure in Afghanistan. Recently, an Indian consortium was awarded mining rights for three blocks of the Hajigak iron ore deposits by the Government of Afghanistan.

Those are concrete manifestations of our long-term political commitment to Afghanistan. If others do the same, we could set off a virtuous cycle of healthy economic development in Afghanistan that benefits Afghanistan and the region and start, as President Karzai has called it, a cooperative, rather than a competitive, great game in the region.

Afghanistan's growth strategy is built on the country's comparative advantage consisting of abundant natural resources and its strategic geographical location. We see Afghanistan as a hub linking the Middle East, West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia through trade and transit routes, railways and highways, energy pipelines and electricity networks, economic projects and cross-investments. It is our expectation that such cooperation would not only be at the intergovernmental level but would also involve civil society and business as stakeholders.

The greatest need today is for the Afghan people to have peace and stability. They deserve to live in peace and to decide their future themselves, without outside interference, coercion and intimidation. All countries of the region must work to facilitate that. The international community as a whole needs to work with renewed vigour and unity of purpose towards strengthening the efforts of the Afghan Government in seeking solutions that are inclusive and led by the Afghan people themselves.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that India appreciates and supports the good work being done by UNAMA. I would also like to welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ján Kubiš, and to assure him of our full support.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I want to join others in acknowledging the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin and to thank him very much for his inspiring statement. I would also like to thank former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, not only for his remarkable success but especially for the confidence that he demonstrates for the future of Afghanistan. I also want to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his comprehensive briefing.

This morning my intervention will focus on three areas — security, political development and economic and regional development. We are gratified to hear about the concerted and strenuous efforts to sustain peace and stability in Afghanistan. However, the continuing security situation remains a cause for concern. Recent reports of insurgencies across the Afghan borders, incidents of civilian casualties and targeted high-profile assassinations, especially the assassination of Professor Rabbani, former Afghan President and Chair of the High Peace Council, threaten to decimate the fragile peace and stability achieved over the years.

The wave of bombings across three cities, which killed 52 people, as the country shared celebrations of Ashura, signals the disturbing sectarian undertone of the continuing violence. Against that backdrop, the November 2011 World Bank Report draws a direct correlation between the planned 2014 withdrawal of foreign troops and a potential economic recession or collapse in Afghanistan. The report predicts that Afghanistan would suffer a recession in 2014, after foreign troops leave and aid dwindles and that if the security situation gets worse the country could face complete economic collapse.

Given the formidable security challenges still confronting the country, we face the critical task of finding a compromise between the planned withdrawal of troops and President Karzai's request for security support well into 2024. The need to proceed in a manner that assures the strengthening of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and preserves the fragile peace cannot be overemphasized. The military plan for the interim period should therefore focus on sustained training of the ANSF. We identify with the plan to increase the size of the Forces. The

Government of Afghanistan must ensure, however, that the necessary safeguards are in place within the transition period to guarantee the ability of the ANSF to assume full control over Afghan security. The international community, for its part, must throw its weight behind the Afghan Government, if the crucial fight against terrorism is to be won.

In the political arena, Nigeria welcomes the continuing progress in the reconciliation and reintegration efforts in Afghanistan, despite the cyclical violence, especially in the south and the east of the country. In order to forge the national unity envisaged within the larger political framework, the peace process must continue to be Afghan-driven. In that connection, we welcome the resumption of parliamentary activities and the recent confirmation by the National Assembly of key appointments, including that of a member of the Independent Commission for the Supervision of the Implementation of the Constitution.

The resolution of the impasse in the National Assembly is a clear indication that Afghanistan's nascent democracy is gradually taking root. The search for a comprehensive peace in Afghanistan within a reasonable time frame also requires progress in efforts to resume peace talks with moderate elements of the Taliban. Notwithstanding the inclusiveness of its discussions at the November meeting, the Loya Jirga must work harder to find a way forward on the issue.

On the economic and regional development fronts, we would like to encourage the implementation of a well-articulated economic policy that will sustain economic growth and the development of Afghan society. As we invest substantially in the security sector, we must also increase our financial contributions to strengthen the country's economic base, so as to avoid its collapse. Emphasis should be placed on the strengthening of institutions, particularly at the subnational level, the creation of jobs and economic opportunities and the delivery of basic amenities.

Long-term international support and private-sector investment will enhance revenue generation and propel economic activities. For greater coherence and efficiency, we underline the need to continue channelling funds and other forms of assistance through the Afghan budget system. The commitment demonstrated by international partners in the Istanbul and Bonn Conferences to long-term support for Afghanistan beyond 2014 is very encouraging. However, concrete measures must be taken to follow up on those commitments.

We commend the Government of Afghanistan for the enormous strides it has made towards regional cooperation. The improved dialogue and cooperation among its neighbours has led to the implementation of several joint commissions related to bilateral trade and the exchange of information that could improve synergy in efforts to fight illicit trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings, as well as organized crime. In that regard, we welcome the formation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission on Reconciliation and Peace. We also endorse the tripartite meetings of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States. We hope that those forums will provide the necessary springboard for addressing both the internal and the external dimensions of the conflict.

In conclusion, we wish to extend our deep appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General de Mistura for his characteristic exceptional leadership. We owe a great debt to the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and all United Nations personnel for their remarkable commitment to building a sustainable and democratic Afghanistan. We look forward to a productive working relationship with the Secretary-General's incoming Special Representative, Mr. Ján Kubiš.

In its transition towards assuming full responsibility for its political and economic future, we assure the Government of Afghanistan of Nigeria's support for, and commitment to, the legitimate causes of both the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/772*) and welcome the presence here today of Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We hope that he is able to swiftly take over his new duties and reiterate that he can rely on France's support. I wish, of course, to thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his work and again express to him our strongest friendship and esteem.

I endorse the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and will limit my statement to three points: the deteriorating regional environment, our shared objectives and the role of the United Nations in achieving those objectives.

First, with regard to the deteriorating conditions in the regional environment, it is paradoxical that the regional climate has deteriorated in an alarming fashion, while progress has been made in Afghanistan. For example, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board met after a one-year hiatus, a Peace Jirga was held in an atmosphere of calm, Parliament resumed activities after several months of stalemate and the transition process continued, with many municipalities and districts having been selected for the second tranche of that process. Another example of progress is the recapitalization of the Kabul Bank, which meant that the International Monetary Fund could resume its country programme.

Notwithstanding that, the regional climate has deteriorated. Since 2008, France has championed efforts to enhance regional cooperation, for example by holding the ministerial meeting in La Celle Saint-Cloud. Afghanistan must again become a centre for productive trade, as it had been in the past. The States of Central Asia understood that, as did the countries that met in September in New York to discuss a vision for the New Silk Road. The region needs a collective security system to fight the scourge of terrorism and establish specific confidence-building measures between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

During the Istanbul Conference, which also dealt with regional security and cooperation, Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries stated that they were willing to work on confidence-building measures to bring about peace and security in Afghanistan and in the region. The countries of the region must make specific and binding commitments in preparation for the meeting to be held in Kabul in June 2012.

Secondly, with regard to our objectives, the goal of the international community and Afghanistan will continue to be the country's lasting stability and the Afghan people's ownership of their national destiny. Transition is already a reality for half of the country's people. The foreign presence in Afghanistan will evolve so as to support the build-up of the Afghan National Security Forces. France, for its part, will reduce and redeploy its contingent in consultation with our allies and the Afghan authorities.

A cooperation agreement between France and Afghanistan, which is being concluded, will address the build-up of the civilian component of our work. In Bonn, on 5 December, we entered into mutual agreements for the 2015-2024 Transformation Decade, which will follow up on the transition process and be consistent with the commitments made in Kabul in 2010. I should like to congratulate Germany and Afghanistan for the success of that important event and support the statement to be made in that regard by the President of the Security Council.

We remain determined to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a haven for international terrorism. The real but residual presence of elements linked to Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and in the Pakistani tribal areas is a reminder that the danger still persists, even though it is nothing like it was 10 years ago. The perpetrators of the recent attacks, in particular on the Day of Ashura, and the killers of Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani must be condemned and brought to justice. There is room for those who wish to lay down their arms and rejoin the Afghan constitutional framework. For a lasting and fair peace, inter-Afghan reconciliation must be inclusive, offer an equitable place in Afghan society to its various components, and respect human rights.

Thirdly, with regard the role of the United Nations, we firmly believe that the Organization in general and UNAMA in particular have a major role to play in Afghanistan in the years to come. The success of the transformation depends to a large degree on UNAMA's success. We therefore await with interest the results of the current review. The United Nations must continue to support democratic governance, particularly in the areas of support for the electoral process and for strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights. It must also support the national and regional aspects of the peace process and coordinate the work of the United Nations with the assistance provided by the international community. The fight against drug trafficking should remain central to the work of specialized entities, particularly the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with support from UNAMA.

We cannot expect everything from the United Nations after 2014, but, given the challenges that await

Afghanistan, it is essential that we reaffirm our support for a strong Mission in order to sustain the transformation towards a peaceful, stable, prosperous and regionally integrated Afghanistan.

Mr. Messone (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/772*) on the situation in Afghanistan. We acknowledge the presence here of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and thank him for his briefing. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and Mr. Staffan de Mistura for bringing us up to date on the situation.

My delegation also welcomes the conclusions of the International Afghanistan Conference that took place in Bonn on 5 December, and we thank Germany for that initiative.

My delegation would like first and foremost to comment on the subject of the full implementation of all the pillars of the transformation and transition process through 2024. Afghanistan, which has resumed responsibility for its own stabilization and peacebuilding, must deal with the security challenges it will face after the international forces leave. While aware that 2011 has been a particularly difficult year for Afghanistan, we commend the progress that has been made in the political arena. The national dialogue that we have continued to urge for is now a reality, through an active parliament that is already preparing to implement the Kabul process. That dialogue must become more inclusive and more united. While we are well aware that not all parties are participating effectively, we continue to call on all parties to take part in the transition process.

With regard to security, my delegation strongly condemns the recent terrorist attacks on 6 December in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. Once again, we extend our condolences to the families of the deceased and our hopes for a speedy recovery for the injured. Such attacks are unacceptable. But we want to encourage the Afghan Government and people in their determination and resilience, for the transition will have to endure other security challenges. We continue to encourage dialogue by means of existing instruments, particularly the High Peace Council, and we urge the renunciation of violence and terrorism. Similarly, we must remember the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Afghan local police in order to better protect civilians, especially women and children, the most vulnerable. Finally, we encourage respect for the rule of law and call for the perpetrators of terrorist acts to be brought to justice.

With regard to economic and social matters, we encourage the Afghan Government to restore its people's confidence in their State by strengthening good governance. Afghanistan needs determined effort in order to rebuild a sustainable economy. We congratulate it on its good relations with its neighbours and commend the various cooperation agreements reached with those countries on trade, industry and energy, aimed at restoring Afghanistan's economy and improving growth.

We of course support the role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other United Nations bodies. As Mr. Ladsous emphasized, it is important that we continue to consider the future role of the United Nations, particularly in the area of development. In that regard, we should commend all the efforts undertaken to meet the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the finalization of the reproductive health strategy plan and the successful polio vaccination plan in southern Afghanistan. Finally, we welcome the strengthening of the renewed partnership and cooperation between Afghanistan and the various international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and to wish him all the best in his new position at home. We also wish every success in his mandate for his successor, Mr. Ján Kubiš. We support UNAMA and all renewals of its mandate needed to reinforce the international community's efforts towards transition and transformation.

We associate ourselves with and support the draft presidential statement to be made later in this debate.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing and to welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin to our meeting. I would also like to thank Mr. De Mistura for his briefing.

The Bonn Conference on 5 December was a significant international event in Afghanistan's current period of transition. Its results were positive and decided that at the conclusion of transition in 2014,

Afghanistan would enter the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024 and the international community would continue to help and support it. We welcome that decision.

Achieving comprehensive stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan is a long-term process that will require the unremitting efforts of the Afghan people and their Government, as well as the continued support and help of the international community. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the following five points.

First, China supports the peaceful reconstruction of an Afghanistan run and owned by Afghans. Afghanistan's gradual takeover of the responsibility for maintaining national security conforms to that principle. However, when drawing down troops, the parties concerned must ensure Afghanistan's security and proceed responsibly, while making efforts to help Afghanistan build capacity in the security area.

Secondly, China supports the peace and reintegration process led by the Afghan Government. We welcome the decision of the Loya Jirga in that regard, and hope that Afghanistan will continue to work towards promoting national reconciliation and creating an environment favourable to it, in order to make progress with the peace and reintegration programme.

Thirdly, China supports Afghanistan in continuing with the Kabul process. The international community's efforts to improve the security situation in Afghanistan and the living standards of the Afghan people should complement each other. The parties concerned should effectively fulfil their commitment to assisting Afghanistan, support the country in developing its economy and enhance its capacity for sustainable development.

Fourthly, China firmly supports Afghanistan's developing external relations on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, especially in strengthening good-neighbourly relations with countries of its region. Relevant regional cooperation initiatives should fully respect the sovereignty and autonomy of Afghanistan, involve the wide participation of countries of its region, respect the legitimate concerns of such countries and proceed on the basis of agreements reached after full consultations among all sides.

Fifthly, China appreciates the positive efforts made by the United Nations to advance the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. We hope that the review of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will help to strengthen the central role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of the international community to assist Afghanistan. In the review process, we hope that the United Nations will strengthen coordination with Afghanistan and listen to and respect its views.

China wishes to express its appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his outstanding work as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

China has been committed to the development of a good-neighbourly relationship with Afghanistan. We attach importance to and take an active part in Afghan reconstruction. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yang Jiechi, led the Chinese delegation to the Bonn Conference, where he comprehensively elaborated on China's views and proposals regarding the situation in the country and announced an additional ¥150 million in gratis assistance to Afghanistan. We will continue to provide help to Afghanistan as our capacities permit, and we are willing to work together with the international community to contribute to the early realization of peace, stability and development of the country.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2011/772*) and Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his briefing this morning. I would also thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his valedictory comments. My thanks also go to Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin for his interesting and insightful comments.

I will focus my statement today on the landscape up to and beyond 2014, but let me begin by expressing my condolences on the loss of innocent lives in the suicide attacks of 6 December. The United Kingdom strongly condemns such atrocities, but we are clear that these acts of terrorism will not undermine the international community's commitment to Afghanistan.

This year's achievements on Afghanistan were brought together in the Bonn Conference. The international community came together at Bonn to send a strong signal of its long-term commitment to Afghanistan beyond the transition process. We

congratulate Germany and Afghanistan for the successful Conference.

I would like to highlight four of the key elements of the blueprint that was agreed.

First, the international community reaffirmed its readiness to support the Afghan Government in developing the country's economy. International partners will direct financial support to Afghanistan to help it achieve self-sustainability. We will work with the Afghan Government and international partners on detailed plans, which we hope to discuss at the Tokyo Conference in July 2012. Alongside that, we welcome the Afghan Government's commitment to revitalize the reform process agreed in Kabul last year and to accelerate progress on the key development priorities.

Secondly, participants agreed to produce a clear plan for the future structure and funding of the Afghan National Security Forces beyond 2014, in advance of the NATO Chicago summit next May.

Thirdly, the conclusions set out an agreed set of guiding principles for the reconciliation process and its outcomes. That builds on the recent traditional Loya Jirga and the agreement there to an inclusive, representative peace process.

Fourthly, the Conference also reinforced the importance of regional engagement alongside wider international support for Afghanistan, building on the successful Istanbul Conference in November.

Combined, those elements provide a clear framework for future partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community beyond 2014. We must now ensure that we honour these commitments as we enter the Transformation Decade and enable Afghanistan to build on its hard-won gains over the last ten years.

Underpinning the progress is the ongoing transition process. The United Kingdom welcomes President Karzai's announcement on 27 November that the second set of provinces and districts are to begin security transition. The Afghans are well on track to take lead responsibility for security across the country by the end of 2014.

The protection of the Afghan civilian population is at the core of the military strategy, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is working extremely hard to reduce the levels of civilian casualties. There are strict procedures in place, both to minimize the risk of casualties occurring and to investigate any incidents that do happen. The vast majority of civilian deaths — some 77 per cent, according to the latest figures — are caused by the insurgents. There is a key difference: ISAF places a high priority on reducing and preventing civilian casualties; the insurgency, in contrast, targets civilians indiscriminately.

A further step on the path to full Afghan sovereignty is the importance of enabling key reforms to support economic self-sustainability. We therefore welcome the agreement between the Government of Afghanistan and the International Monetary Fund on a new programme of support. That decision shows that the Afghan Government has made progress in reassuring international donors and ordinary Afghans alike that they are serious about providing a safe economic and business environment.

As we go forward, it is critical that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continues to play a key role, supporting the emergence of a secure and self-sustainable Afghan State. We look forward to the results of the review of UNAMA and associated United Nations activities. In particular, the United Kingdom emphasizes the critical importance of UNAMA's role in, first, supporting the Government of Afghanistan in strengthening the electoral process and framework; second, coordinating rule of law initiatives; and third, encouraging regional cooperation.

I would like to end by expressing the United Kingdom's warm appreciation for the outstanding work carried out by the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura. We also greatly welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative, Ján Kubiš, and look forward to working closely with him.

We agree to the draft presidential statement.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for introducing the quarterly report of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan (S/2011/772*). We also thank the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his invaluable assessments. We thank him for the dedication and commitment he showed during his tenure as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. South Africa appreciates the

participation of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Ludin, in today's meeting and thanks him for his statement. We congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and pledge our support for him.

Afghanistan continues to face numerous political, security and humanitarian challenges. South Africa supports the concerted efforts of the Afghan Government to address those challenges, with the sustained assistance of the international community. The International Conference on Afghanistan held in earlier this month in Bonn, in which South Africa participated, again signaled the resolve of the international community to support the Government and the people of Afghanistan beyond 2014 in consolidating their transition to peace and stability.

My delegation is pleased to note that the National Assembly resumed its functions on 8 October, following a year-long impasse. We are further encouraged by the conclusion of the traditional Loya Jirga that convened from 16 to 19 November 2011, reaffirming the importance of continued dialogue and outreach among the various parties and groupings in Afghanistan.

South Africa fully supports efforts to strengthen political outreach activities. Political dialogue and reconciliation is a critical factor for the Afghan people and their Government for ensuring sustainable peace for the country, which has suffered severely as a result of continued insecurity.

South Africa is concerned by the increase in security-related incidents. We reiterate our condemnation of the assassination of the former President and head of the High Peace Council, Mr. Rabbani, in September. That tragic incident should strengthen the resolve of Afghans to reject attempts by those who are intent on derailing the peace and reconciliation process. My delegation commends the courageous conciliatory response of the Government of Afghanistan in the face of that provocation.

We condemn the bloody attacks in Kandahar on 31 October, which claimed the lives of United Nations personnel. We also condemn the 6 December terrorist attacks in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif, which caused numerous deaths and injuries among civilians who had gathered on the occasion of Ashura. South Africa hopes that those who committed the atrocities will be brought to justice.

In spite of some progress, the precarious security situation continues to have a negative humanitarian impact on Afghan civilians, especially women and children, who are the most vulnerable. We are concerned by the increase in the number of internally displaced persons, which is worsened by the severe drought in the northern and western regions of the country. It is therefore essential for the international community to actively support Afghanistan in addressing that critical issue and to fulfil all obligations made.

As we have stated previously, my delegation believes that there is a link between development and security in Afghanistan. We are pleased that the Afghan Government continues its commitment to address the socio-economic situation facing the country. In that context, we encourage the Government to increase its efforts to improve institutional capacity and to offer viable alternatives to poppy cultivation and narcotics.

Sustainable peace in Afghanistan will be enhanced by regional cooperation. In that regard, we welcome the outcomes of the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan, held on 2 November, jointly convened by Turkey and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which developed confidence-building measures to improve regional cooperation. Other regional initiatives, including the upcoming trilateral summit among Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, will contribute to improving relations between Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours. That in turn will facilitate normalization of the situation in Afghanistan.

National ownership and leadership remains crucial to political, security and social and economic progress in Afghanistan. We therefore welcome the continued progress in the implementation of the Kabul process. For its part, the international community should continue its supportive role in the country's transition from conflict to stability and prosperity. South Africa will continue to work with its partners in the Security Council in supporting that process.

Once again, we thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his service to UNAMA and wish him well in his new responsibilities.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his comprehensive briefing today and thank Ambassador Staffan de Mistura for his participation in today's meeting and for his outstanding work as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). I wish him well in his new and important duties. We also welcome the presence of Ambassador Ján Kubiš, congratulate him on his nomination and wish him full success. I express Portugal's full support to him in the challenging work ahead. We also welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin and thank him for his contribution to today's debate.

The past few months have witnessed several important events for Afghanistan, particularly with regard to regional cooperation, the way forward after 2014 and the second phase of the transition process. Regional cooperation, as several speakers have highlighted, continues to be one of the fundamental pillars of a new Afghanistan.

The Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan, held on 2 November, initiated the Istanbul Process, reaffirming general principles of regional cooperation, but also including a list of specific confidence-building measures for consideration by the countries of the region. We look forward to the concept paper to be circulated in January, outlining the agenda for a follow-up ministerial-level conference in Kabul in June 2012.

On 5 December, the Bonn Conference provided an extremely significant opportunity for charting the way forward for the partnership between Afghanistan and its international partners. The Conference reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to support Afghanistan through the transition, with a focus on economic development and on the peace and reconciliation process, in line with agreed principles.

The commitments made are all the more important since they revolve around the Kabul process and are based on greater transparency and better governance. The civil society meeting, which reaffirmed the centrality of human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, is particularly noteworthy and should serve as an example to us of the strength of the Afghan society's capacity to mobilize around shared values and ambitions.

As regards the *inteqal*, or transition, process, Portugal is encouraged by the progress achieved so far. The fact that areas already under full Afghan security responsibility do not show any particular increase in violence and security incidents is extremely positive. As the Chair of the Transition Coordination Commission has noted,

> "Commitments made at the Lisbon Conference are still on track: the phased military withdrawal has begun, the Kabul Process is reinvigorated, and preparations for strategic partnerships are under way."

As the Secretary-General said in his report, the human rights and humanitarian situations remain "a major concern throughout the country" (S/2011/722*, para. 27). The vast majority of civilian casualties are attributable to anti-Government elements, and efforts by pro-Government forces have resulted in a significant decrease in the percentage of civilian casualties attributable to them.

Rule of law, in particular the judiciary and penitentiary systems, needs particular monitoring and reform, as highlighted by the Secretary-General's report. Regarding the recent findings on abuses of detainees and indeed of several cases of torture, the cooperation provided by competent Afghan authorities to UNAMA is the best possible way to get these occurrences to stop. Portugal supports the remediation plan advanced by UNAMA comprising inspection, human rights training, monitoring and supporting Government accountability actions.

Portugal follows with utmost attention the situation of Afghan women and welcomes the recently released report on the criminal justice system's implementation of the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women. We support to the fullest extent the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan and of UNAMA to promote and protect the human rights of women and to advocate and monitor implementation of this law, as well as to promote the political participation of women in the peace and reconciliation process. Portugal echoes the Afghan women's civil society and advocacy groups, as well as the United Nations, who carried those messages forward to the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, in order to highlight the continuing need to support women's rights and empowerment in Afghanistan.

I conclude by recalling the overarching goals that have inspired the recent initiatives on Afghanistan. Portugal encourages the efforts that Afghan institutions and Afghan civil society are making to consolidate the gains of the last few years. As the transition process gathers momentum and increasingly reaches greater sections of Afghanistan, and as the phased military withdrawal of the international military presence continues, socio-economic development, particularly in education, professional training and the social promotion of women, must be considered a strategic interest in the creation of a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): I welcome Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Jawad Ludin and thank him for his presentation. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his briefing. I wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to Special Representative Staffan de Mistura for his leadership as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and for his participation today. I take this opportunity to wish him all the best in his new assignment. I welcome Mr. Ján Kubiš and wish him well in fulfilling his important responsibilities.

We meet today to discuss the Secretary-General's latest report on the activities of UNAMA (S/2011/772*), but also to exchange views on the results of the conferences held in Istanbul and in Bonn. We welcome the information in the report on the developments in the transition process in the field of security. We appreciate the fact that areas already under control of the Afghan forces remained relatively stable.

It is encouraging to see that UNAMA and the United Nations agencies have continued to further important actions in areas such as humanitarian assistance, development and human rights. We welcome the three priorities of the work of the United Nations in Afghanistan, as outlined by Mr. Ladsous. Brazil hopes that the international community will continue to lend its full support to Afghanistan beyond 2014, helping it move towards greater stability and socio-economic development. It is important that the commitments expressed during the Bonn Conference be swiftly translated into tangible actions.

We welcome the fact that the first priority of the United Nations in Afghanistan will be to link security and development. Brazil has encouraged a more integrated approach between security and development in our efforts to consolidate peace. Such an approach will certainly benefit peace consolidation in Afghanistan. The international community should step up actions in the fields of agriculture, job creation, health, education, infrastructure and public administration, in line with the priorities indicated by the Afghan stakeholders.

We are also of the view that the transition should be coupled with tangible progress in the reconciliation process. A political solution is indispensable to achieve durable peace. We hope that an inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders, led by the Afghans themselves, will lead to a united Afghanistan capable of facing the threat of terrorism.

Brazil also commends the initiatives aimed at enhancing the coordination of international economic assistance. We welcome the initiative of holding a ministerial conference in Japan in 2012 to discuss strategies to further sustainable development in Afghanistan.

The United Nations has a crucial role in Afghanistan. Brazil expects the United Nations to be a central actor during the transition period and afterwards, especially with regard to civilian aspects of international assistance to the country.

Countries in the region should also increasingly be engaged in the strategies to stabilize Afghanistan. Economic ties are particularly relevant. We commend the results of the Istanbul Conference, an important step in fostering greater confidence and cooperation among countries in the region.

To conclude, let me express our hope that the international community will continue to assist Afghanistan to lay the foundation for a better and prosperous future. Brazil pledges once again its full support to that process.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

We are grateful to Mr. Ladsous for his substantive analysis of the situation in Afghanistan. We took note with interest of the assessment by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Ludin. We are grateful to Mr. De Mistura for the account he gave, and also for his work as Head of the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We would like to wish every success to Mr. Kubiš.

Over the past decade, the Afghan people have achieved a great deal, above all with respect to establishing political institutions and economic recovery. Despite that, the way the current situation is developing does not, unfortunately, inspire optimism. Instability is prevalent across the entire territory of Afghanistan. Terrorist attacks and the assassination of politicians and peaceful civilians continue. There have been major losses within the Coalition and Afghan forces.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), when working with the Afghan authorities, must take more decisive steps to curb the threat from the Taliban and Al Qaeda. It is important to respect the sovereignty of other States in the planning and conduct of counter-terrorist operations. Civilian casualties are unacceptable. While we note the efforts of the international forces to minimize such casualties, we also trust that they will be more effective in the future. That would be more helpful in normalizing the overall situation.

The decrease in the number of foreign troops must be accompanied by an increase in the level of combat readiness of Afghan forces so that they themselves can counter terrorism and drug-related crime. The task of training Afghan forces in combat readiness is one of the objectives that the Security Council set when it created the mandate of ISAF. Furthermore, we again stress that the international military presence must have a temporary character. ISAF must leave Afghanistan after reporting to the Security Council on the fulfilment of its mandate, which authorized its deployment in that country.

It is common knowledge that in Afghanistan, terrorism is closely tied to drug-related crime. Drug trafficking has become one of the main sources fuelling terrorist activity and has become a threat to international peace and stability. The drug threat must receive a comprehensive response from the international community with respect to all its aspects, from destroying drug crops to listing the names of drug barons on the sanctions list. In that context, we assign great importance to the Third Ministerial Conference of the Paris Pact, on "Drug Routes from Afghanistan," to be held on 18 February in Vienna.

The national reconciliation process remains a key part of Afghan settlement. The process must continue under the leadership of Afghan authorities, but the insurgents must comply with the three familiar conditions: to recognize the Constitution, to repudiate Al Qaeda and other terrorist and extremist organizations, and to disarm. The quid pro quo for those criteria is that they will be automatically removed from the sanctions list. The Security Council sanctions regime is the paramount instrument for countering terrorism.

The situation cannot be resolved solely by force. The country's economy must be boosted. We support the Istanbul Conference's focus on strengthening regional cooperation. We need to comprehensively develop and perfect cooperation within existing regional frameworks, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Dushanbe Quartet — Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan — the Economic Cooperation Organization and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. We view the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a crucial platform for regional contributions to the international efforts for a settlement in Afghanistan. Afghanistan and its neighbours are already participating in its work.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in should maintain its function of coordinating international civilian efforts in Afghanistan. To that end, planning for the future presence of the United Nations in the country, for its role in organizing the elections process and for national reconciliation requires listening carefully to the wishes of the Afghan people themselves.

We are convinced that the coordinated efforts of the international community and the Afghan Government, which the Istanbul and Bonn Conferences were intended to support, will lead to the restoration of a peaceful, sovereign and neutral Afghanistan free of terrorism and drugs.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make this statement on their behalf:

> "The Security Council welcomes the International Afghanistan Conference 'Afghanistan

and the International Community: From Transition to the Transformation Decade' in Bonn on 5 December 2011 and its conference conclusions (S/2011/762).

"The Security Council welcomes also the declaration in Bonn that the process of transition, to be completed by the end of 2014, should be followed by a Decade of Transformation (2015-2024) in which Afghanistan consolidates its sovereignty through strengthening a fully functioning, sustainable State in the service of its people.

"The Security Council welcomes furthermore, against this background, the strategic consensus between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the international community on a renewed and enduring partnership for this Transformation Decade which entails firm mutual commitments.

"The Security Council notes that the process of Transition entails the assumption of the leadership responsibility by the Government of Afghanistan.

"The Security Council commends the outcome of the 'Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia' of 2 November 2011.

"The Security Council underlines the crucial role of the United Nations in Afghanistan, expresses its gratitude for Staffan de Mistura's outstanding contribution to UNAMA's work, and looks forward to working with the Secretary General's incoming Special Representative, Ján Kubiš.

"The Security Council welcomes the intention of the Government of Japan to host a ministerial conference in Tokyo in July of 2012."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2011/22.

We will now resume our discussion. I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rivard (Canada) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan for their thoughtful interventions.

On 5 December, the participants at the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan made clear that 2014 would not mark the end of our common engagement in that country, but rather a milestone in our continued commitment to make Afghanistan a secure and sustainable democracy. Canada and its partners underlined the importance of mutual accountability between the Afghan Government and the international community to ensure a successful transition to and beyond 2014.

The New Year will bring the renewal of the important mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. It is clear that the Afghan Government must inevitably assume greater part of the responsibilities for the sovereignty of the country, but the United Nations must also continue to play a long-term role, working with Afghan institutions, both to help promote and protect human rights and to build on what has been achieved with regard to the integrity of representative democracy in the country.

Between now and 2014, Canada will be investing $360 million in Afghanistan. Our priorities are well defined. We will invest in the future of Afghan children and youth through implementing programmes in education and health. We will advance security, the rule of law and human rights, including through the second-largest contribution to the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan. We will continue to encourage cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours by way of active regional diplomacy, and we will deliver humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. At all times, in the framework of our commitment to implement Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, Canada will pay particular attention to Afghan women and girls.

Canada will not end its commitment to Afghanistan's stability at the completion of the transition process. Canada's ultimate aim has been, and continues to be, to help Afghans rebuild Afghanistan, to make it a viable country that is better governed, more stable and secure and never again a safe haven for terrorists. Beyond 2014, we will stay engaged in defending and further advancing the crucial gains made in the protection of human rights and the establishment of a transparent and representative democracy.

Cementing recent security gains will require a concerted effort on the part of Afghanistan to maintain its focus on the professionalization of the Afghan

National Security Forces. Only in a secure environment can the Afghan population move toward economic development, stability and peace. In that regard, we welcome the progress made in the districts under the first tranche of the security transition process. We hope it will be possible to secure similar results in areas included in the second tranche of the transition.

Security efforts alone, however, will not be sufficient to guarantee the success of the transition. The transition will also require the support of transparent governance, a more robust rule of law and a determination to undertake the reforms necessary to develop the private sector and to attract foreign investment.

Afghanistan's private sector economy will help generate much-needed employment opportunities while generating the State revenue necessary for successful transformation. In this nascent phase of its development, Canada encourages Afghanistan to work assiduously to ensure it has an effective regulatory framework to ensure sustainable benefits for its people from the development of its natural resources. It is also important to work with companies and other stakeholders in multi-stakeholder initiatives aimed at improving corporate social responsibility and transparency, including the full implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Canada is encouraged by progress in efforts between the Government of Afghanistan and its partners to advance the Afghan National Development Strategy and national priority programmes.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada believes that Afghan civil society has a central role to play in the Afghan-led transformation process. In Bonn, Canada's Foreign Minister, the Honourable John Baird, placed particular emphasis on meeting civil society representatives and reiterated that the inclusion of women in all Afghan-led transformation efforts remains a priority for the Government of Canada.

The importance of maintaining a strong focus on defending women's rights in Afghanistan was illustrated by the November 2011 United Nations report on the implementation of the country's law on the elimination of violence against women. We cannot forget that, as the report states, there remains a long way to go. We firmly believe that the full and equal participation of women from diverse experiences and fields, at all levels of decision-making, is essential to developing a stronger society.

Building on progress accomplished, Canada will continue to be an effective partner for human rights reform. In this regard, we must not forget the right to practice one's faith in peace. The recent attacks that killed and injured dozens of Shiite worshippers on the day of Ashura remind us that Afghanistan and its neighbours must take every measure to promote and preserve harmonious inter-ethnic and interreligious relations in the country. It is significant that no retribution has been exacted, and we applaud the Afghan people for rising above that terrible provocation and rejecting sectarian violence. Canada hopes that this spirit will further encourage ongoing efforts to strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups' human rights.

Canada remains troubled by the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, caused by the ongoing conflict and exacerbated by the worsening drought conditions. Of particular concern are the deliberate attacks against civilians and the continued violations of international humanitarian law. Canada condemns violence against humanitarian workers and calls all parties to respect humanitarian principles to allow safe and unhindered access to those in need.

The impact of drought in Afghanistan calls for the most effective response to ensure that food reaches the most vulnerable, particularly women and children, before winter conditions prevent access. To this end, Canada will contribute $13 million to the World Food Programme to provide humanitarian assistance for drought-affected populations in the northern and north-eastern provinces of Afghanistan during the difficult winter months.

The Bonn Conference provided an opportunity for Afghanistan and the international community to more clearly articulate the principles of the reconciliation process. Canada supports these principles and will continue to offer its support to Afghan-led reconciliation efforts by encouraging active engagement of Afghan civil society, including women and vulnerable groups. Our firm belief is that national political reconciliation will not hold until it reaches all Afghans.

Equally important, reconciliation in Afghanistan will require the support and cooperation of

Afghanistan's neighbours. Canada views as positive the outcomes of the Istanbul meeting on security and cooperation in the heart of Asia. Our ongoing facilitation of Afghanistan's and Pakistan's efforts to strengthen the security and management of their shared border, by way of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Cooperation Process, is one practical way in which we hope to contribute to this vision.

Finally, I would like to conclude by offering Canada's warmest thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, for his wholehearted dedication and remarkable work to advance the common objectives of Afghanistan and its partners toward peace and stability. Canada welcomes the nomination of Mr. Ján Kubiš to undertake the continuation of the important work of the United Nations in this period of new beginnings for the international engagement in Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): I wish to extend warm greetings to His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, who is with us today. We welcome the insightful and comprehensive statement he has made. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his insightful briefing. We take note of the valuable observations expressed in the report (S/2011/772*) of the Secretary-General.

Before I proceed, let me also express our sincere appreciation to outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura for his strong leadership and dedication during a very critical time in Afghanistan. Our Embassy in Kabul and our authorities enjoyed excellent cooperation with him and his able team. We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with him in his new capacity.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Ján Kubiš. We are confident that his wealth of knowledge and experience will be an important asset for Afghanistan and for the whole international community as Afghanistan goes through another important phase in its history. We look forward to working in close cooperation with Mr. Kubiš in the coming weeks.

Afghanistan has achieved significant progress in the past 10 years. In spite of remaining challenges, Afghanistan today continues to invest in a better future for its people. In that respect, we welcome the announcement of the second tranche for the transfer of security responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces. We expect that, by the end of February 2012, half of the Afghan population will be under the security responsibility of the Afghan National Security Forces.

As Afghans assume more responsibility for the security of their country, we should equally focus our energies on the sustainable development and institutional and civilian capacity-building of the country. The development needs of Afghanistan are immense. The continued assistance of the international community will be required over the long term. We believe that a strong focus on education is imperative if we seek to achieve prosperity for the country. We should therefore concentrate on educating future generations of Afghan boys and girls. Likewise, we should intensify our efforts to empower Afghan women. We must also continue to strengthen institutional capacity-building to enable Afghan forces to combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

Turkey considers regional ownership and cooperation as an essential element for lasting peace, stability and prosperity, not only in Afghanistan but also in the region as a whole. With that understanding, Turkey hosted the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan on 2 November. The immediate and extended neighbours, convened in Istanbul under the chairmanship of Turkish and Afghan Foreign Ministers, reaffirmed their strong commitment for a secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan in the region.

Recognizing the central role of the United Nations, the parties in Istanbul welcomed Afghanistan's willingness and determination to use its regional and historical position to do its part to promote security and peaceful economic cooperation in the region. Mindful that the region and the international community are not separated, they emphasized their stake in the security and stability of the region.

By launching the Istanbul Process, the Heart of Asia countries announced a new vision and their determination to own, lead and develop the efforts for enhanced cooperation. We now look forward to the ministerial-level follow-up meeting that will take place in Kabul in June 2012. We believe that the Kabul

meeting will be an important opportunity to build on the momentum achieved by the Istanbul Process.

As we move on with the transition period, with the eventual withdrawal of international military forces, it has become much more essential for the international community to continue its active and strong support to the Afghan Government in order to prevent the country from once again sliding into instability, as well as to avoid setbacks in the ongoing process of reconstruction.

We are therefore pleased with the successful conclusion of the Bonn Conference, which reaffirmed the international community's commitment to Afghanistan beyond the transition decade. The transformation decade defined in Bonn, in which the Afghan people will be in full charge of their future, is an opportunity for us all to concentrate our efforts on the long-term sustainable development of Afghanistan.

Success in Afghanistan requires our long-term commitment. We want to reiterate that Afghan ownership and leadership should be the key in our collective efforts. Let me assure our Afghan brothers that our commitment to Afghanistan is long-term. We will continue to stand by them as long as they require.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous and Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin for their statements this morning. I would also like to convey the deep gratitude of my Government for the dedication and leadership that the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, has given to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) over the past two years. I would also like to welcome the incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ján Kubiš.

The year 2011 has been a difficult one for Afghanistan. The deliberate insurgent strategy of targeted — and high profile — attacks, concerns about Afghanistan's financial and economic capacities, and doubts in the minds of some Afghans about the international community's continued presence have all dented public confidence among the Afghan people. It is therefore important that this year is ending with a number of significant and more positive indicators of progress, in particular renewed activity by the National Assembly, agreement on the International Monetary Fund programme for Afghanistan, the Loya Jirga in November and the Bonn Conference on 5 December.

The Bonn Conference has further consolidated the foundation for the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan, which must extend beyond 2014. It has successfully laid the groundwork for the concrete discussion of two key issues in coming months, namely, the sustainment of the Afghan National Security Forces and coordinated development assistance, particularly at the Tokyo conference in July 2012. It is only concrete discussion, not just discussion, that can be decisive. We were pleased that Bonn explicitly acknowledges the crucial and increasing role to be played by the United Nations in Afghanistan as we move beyond security transition to the more fundamental task of economic transformation.

We welcome the Secretary-General's most recent report (S/2011/772*) on UNAMA and agree with its key findings. We support the establishment of a broad-based peace dialogue and endorse the Secretary-General calls for concerted efforts to forge a national consensus, including with civil society, to achieve that. The renewed focus on engagement at the provincial and district levels that has emerged from the Loya Jirga is particularly welcome. Renewed efforts at the reintegration of insurgents who are prepared to lay down their weapons remain especially urgent.

It will also be important to sustain the momentum of the regional process agreed in Istanbul in November, including through confidence-building measures. We applaud Turkey's determination to help in that regard. Effective cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours is an indispensable part of the international community's efforts to strengthen Afghan institutions, and thereby to promote regional stability.

It will also be essential to ensure a transparent and suitably prioritized economic and development agenda and, most critically, for the international community to develop long-term partnerships with Afghanistan beyond 2014 that underwrite that effort. UNAMA's efforts will be vital, including through its honest-broker political role between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community and its support for the strengthening of electoral processes and the rule of law in Afghanistan. Ensuring the success of the 2014 and 2015 elections will be vital to solidifying democracy.

It is obvious that cooperative action will be essential to meet Afghanistan's economic challenges, particularly through prioritization and reform by the Afghan Government and by the international community actually delivering its commitments on-budget as part of the Kabul process.

My own country, Australia, is itself in the top 10 of Afghanistan's development partners, and we will remain so. Afghanistan is currently the fourth largest recipient of Australian aid, and we will be increasing that over coming years. As the ninth largest troop contributor, our commitment remains serious. We will see through our primary mission of training the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade in Uruzgan province, consistent with the security transition, and we will keep under consideration a continued Australian Special Forces presence in Afghanistan beyond 2014, if that is the wish of the Afghan Government. We announced in November that we will begin negotiations on a long-term framework agreement with Afghanistan, for cooperation well beyond 2014. That will include development assistance as well as security, political, economic and cultural cooperation.

In conclusion, following the Bonn and Istanbul Conferences, we hope that the message from the international community, including from my own country, to the Government and people of Afghanistan is clear: we are not only with you as the transition process unfolds, but we will also be with you long after 2014, as you put Afghanistan on the path from transition to transformation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding country Croatia, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Iceland, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by expressing our sorrow over the loss of life during the recent attacks on Shiite worshippers in Kabul and other Afghan cities and extending our deep condolences to the bereaved families. We also wish a speedy and full recovery for those injured. This is a moment to recall the importance of protecting the values of tolerance, which have traditionally marked religious life in Afghanistan.

Let me continue by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2011/772*) and Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous for his excellent briefing. My thanks also go to Deputy Foreign Minister Jawed Ludin for his insightful presentation.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, for sharing his experiences over his tenure with us by video link. Mr. De Mistura has overseen a period of important developments, including parliamentary elections and the beginning of the transition process. By his unremitting engagement he has greatly enhanced the positive image of the United Nations in Afghanistan and beyond. We are very grateful for his outstanding contribution to progress in Afghanistan.

The period we are entering now is no less significant, and we are therefore very pleased that the Secretary-General has recently appointed Ján Kubiš as his new Special Representative. Let me add, in a personal capacity and also on the basis of my former experience, that I have had the opportunity to get to know Mr. Kubiš in his many activities, as Prime Minister of his country, as Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Geneva and in Central Asia. We are sure that he will be outstanding in the position. We look forward to cooperating with him. His tremendous experience in foreign security policy will be of great value to our joint efforts in Afghanistan.

As the international engagement in Afghanistan is evolving, it is important that the international community and Afghanistan be unambiguous about their mutual commitments for the decade ahead. The European Union is therefore pleased with the conclusions agreed at the recent Bonn Conference. Building on the outcomes of the London and Kabul Conferences and a decade of international engagement following the landmark Petersburg Conference of 2001, the Bonn Conference underlined firm mutual commitments in governance, security, the peace process, development and regional cooperation. Bonn has opened a new perspective for continued

international engagement beyond the end of the transition through the new 2015-2024 Transformation Decade.

It is also very encouraging that the Government of Afghanistan emphasized the importance of governance reform and recognized that democratic institutions at the central and provincial levels need decisive strengthening, including the independence and effective operation of oversight bodies, notably those overseeing public finances. The transparency and accountability ensured by those bodies are essential, in particular for combating corruption. The European Union welcomes the recommitment of the Afghan Government to the full implementation of the Kabul commitments.

It is important that our work in the security field, notably policing, be complemented by developing an effective and independent justice sector. That will be essential if Afghanistan is to build on the progress it has made in the past decade in strengthening civil freedoms and human rights, including women's rights.

At the Bonn Conference we heard the voice of Afghan civil society, and we stressed the need for enhancing the participation of that sector in the country's democratic processes. We also welcome that the Bonn Conference conclusions reaffirmed the principle that the peace and reconciliation process must be inclusive regarding gender and social status and reasserted that the process and its outcome must respect the Afghan Constitution, including its human rights provisions and notably the rights of women. We believe that Afghan women should be able to participate in all aspects and on all levels of the peace and reconciliation process. The European Union wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

The Bonn conclusions also emphasized the importance of strengthening and improving Afghanistan's electoral process, a crucial step forward in the country's democratization. We believe that continuous involvement by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in electoral reform is needed.

Counter-narcotics efforts were also addressed in the Bonn conclusions. The rise in poppy cultivation and potential opium production, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, is of concern. The European Union will continue to support the Afghan Government in combating the narcotics industry and welcomes UNAMA efforts in that regard.

I can assure the Council of the European Union's firm commitment to remain engaged as a strong and reliable partner, including after the transition has been completed, as detailed and specified in the European Union council conclusions of 14 November on Afghanistan. In addition, the European Union has extended the mandate of its police mission until the end of 2014. We will remain committed after the transition to supporting Afghan efforts to strengthen civilian policing and the rule of law.

Allow me to touch upon one aspect that deserves particular attention and encouragement. That is the follow-up to the Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia. The Istanbul Conference laid down a useful basis for a process of political cooperation in Afghanistan's neighbourhood, owned and led by the countries of the region. But further progress will be needed in order to translate the promises into tangible benefits of improved security and economic development in the region.

It will therefore be important to work towards the Kabul ministerial conference in 2012 with the aim of solidifying the commitments of the Istanbul Conference. All countries in the region stand to benefit from a stable and prosperous Afghanistan and from a peaceful solution to the conflict. They should therefore be encouraged to open up trade and transit and encourage cross-border investment, both with Afghanistan and among themselves.

The United Nations can play a central role in supporting any commitments in those areas entered into by the countries in the region. Members of the United Nations family and the Bretton Woods institutions — including the World Trade Organization, the World Customs Organization and many others — can give much needed concrete assistance to integration in the heart of Asia. The European Union stands ready to assist initiatives as well.

In conclusion, the increase in civilian casualties caused by anti-Government elements, including the recent attacks on worshippers, raises the utmost concern. Yet the progress reported on by the Secretary-General also inspires hope for Afghanistan's path from transition to transformation. The role of the United Nations on that path will remain vital for years to

come, which will include assertively coordinating the international community and holding the Afghan Government accountable for its commitments to the Kabul process and Bonn conclusions.

In that regard, a continuous UNAMA presence beyond 2014 is important. The European Union is looking forward to the outcome of the current review of UNAMA's mandated activities and United Nations support in Afghanistan. We stand ready to offer our views on further strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations in Afghanistan. The aim of our joint efforts remains clear: to improve the lives and livelihoods of the Afghan people.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): After 10 years of international military presence in Afghanistan, we have moved into a new phase. The military presence will be gradually scaled down, as the Afghans take over responsibility for their own security. Norwegian combat troops will be withdrawn by 2013, but Norway will not withdraw from Afghanistan. We will remain a partner and friend of Afghanistan during the transition years and during the transformation decade and beyond.

The Bonn Conference focused on civilian aspects and delivered certainty and clarity with respect to the long-term international commitments to Afghanistan. The partnership between Afghanistan and the international community is now based on firm mutual commitments. We foresee a substantial shift from military and security aspects to the political process and long-term development. In that respect, we need a constructive dialogue with Afghanistan on civilian support and civilian presence up to and after 2014. We note with satisfaction that the Kabul process seems to be back on track and that a three-year International Monetary Fund programme for Afghanistan has been confirmed.

Only a political process can resolve the conflict. We must involve all parties to the conflict, as well as ethnic and political groups, civil society and women, in particular. Arms must be replaced by politics. The Afghan Government is facing overwhelming challenges and needs further support from the international community. The terrorism threat is serious and the security situation volatile, but years of training and the gradually increasing responsibility of Afghan security forces have produced results.

Afghan security forces are one key to a stable society. Another and equally important element is the Government's ability to properly perform its functions. We have stated again and again that measures must be taken to improve good governance and its effectiveness in all parts of Afghanistan. The fight against corruption must be intensified and credible democratic institutions established.

It is imperative that the Afghan Constitution be respected. Women's rights and empowerment must be honoured. Afghanistan must unfailingly respect the country's international obligations and, above all, universal and basic human rights.

We find the Istanbul Process to be promising, given its increased focus on regional cooperation. That focus can improve stability and economic development in the wider region also.

On repeated occasions over the years, we have stressed that responsibility for governing and securing Afghanistan lies with the Afghan Government. We will continue to support its efforts to build a stable Afghanistan. International efforts must support the priorities of the Afghan Government. Norway has pledged $125 million annually for civilian purposes. We will provide that annual sum until 2013, and are prepared to continue providing support at a high level in the future.

Finally, our profound gratitude goes to Special Representative de Mistura for his untiring efforts. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Ján Kubiš as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and look forward to continuing excellent cooperation with him. The leading role of the United Nations in Afghanistan is indispensable.

Again in 2011, several civilians, United Nations staff members and International Security Assistance Force soldiers, including a Norwegian soldier, were regrettably killed. We honour their memory and pledge to work with the United Nations to provide safety and security for all personnel.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand joins the Secretary-General in thanking Special

Representative Staffan de Mistura for his leadership and service in Afghanistan, and looks forward to working with Mr. Ján Kubiš. We also welcome the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and thank him for his statement to the Council.

New Zealand is pleased that, after a very difficult year, the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2011/772*) does identify further and steady improvements in Afghanistan. We welcome the progress made in the Kabul process and are encouraged by the work of the Afghan Government to resolve the Kabul Bank situation and to achieve a successful outcome to its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund. However, the Secretary-General's report also identifies challenges still to be confronted, and we remain committed to working with partners to address them.

Since we last addressed this Council on the situation in Afghanistan (see S/PV.6497), the New Zealand provincial reconstruction team has overseen the formal commencement of transition in Bamyan province, one of the first to embark on that process. I am pleased to report that transition is proceeding smoothly. The team has made a conscious effort to encourage the people of Bamyan to turn first to their own Government for assistance. As a result, the local authorities are taking the opportunities offered by transition to assume increasing responsibility for their own affairs.

Going forward, it will be important that the Afghan Government be able to address Bamyan's needs. Transition imposes greater responsibility on provincial officials. Central Government must support those officials by providing adequate resources, delegating authority and, above all, demonstrating a willingness — indeed, it must demonstrate a determination — to replace the few corrupt or incompetent actors with merit-based appointees. Otherwise, the Bamyan population will continue to look past the provincial Government to the donor and non-governmental organization community to deliver basic services.

We welcome the ongoing work of the United Nations to promote and encourage coherence among the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), donors and the Afghan Government — work that better links the Government to its people. As we all cooperate to achieve the ultimate aim of transition, we urge the United Nations to continue that vital work, as there is still room for improvement in efforts to achieve better coordination and communication. The United Nations-supported Central Statistics Organization survey of Bamyan province was an excellent initiative, but more attention to the dissemination of its results would have a positive effect on the ability of local Government to meet the needs of the population.

The transition process is fragile, but we should not underestimate the capacity of Afghan institutions, officials and people to respond to the needs of their communities. With ongoing support from the provincial reconstruction team, the international community and, most importantly, the central Government in Kabul, there are reasons to hope for a successful conclusion to transition in Bamyan in 2013.

New Zealand was very concerned at the October report of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on the widespread mistreatment of detainees in Afghan Government facilities . We are grateful for the United Nations' investigation of that difficult issue and applaud UNAMA for its careful handling of the report's conclusions. New Zealand has expressed its concern directly to the Afghan Government. We welcome its initial response, but also support ISAF's immediate suspension of detainee transfers to the facilities named. Above all, we reiterate that the Government of Afghanistan must continue to address that issue.

We also welcome UNAMA's report on the implementation of the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women . Despite some progress, however, New Zealand's own experience of the application of the law by Afghan judges, prosecutors and police is consistent with many of UNAMA's findings. Even in Bamyan — a province which, most commendably, has had a woman governor since 2005 — the vast majority of cases involving violence against women are not dealt with adequately in the formal justice system. The resulting treatment of victims is degrading. We urge the Afghan Government, with United Nations support, to continue promoting the proper application of the 2009 law, including the replacement of corrupt or ineffective officials as required.

New Zealand strongly supports the outcomes of the recent international meetings on Afghanistan. The Istanbul meeting sent an important regional signal of a

strong commitment to Afghanistan. We are encouraged by the sense of commitment of all participants at the Bonn meeting.

Like everyone else on the ground in Afghanistan, New Zealand has worked hard to achieve good outcomes in Bamyan, and remains committed to seeing the transition process through to a successful conclusion. Then it will be for the people of Bamyan themselves and their Governments — central, provincial and district — to secure their own long-term future.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): I would first like to thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Jawed Ludin, for his participation today in the Council debate on Afghanistan and particularly for his statement. I would also like to thank Mr. Ladsous, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive briefing. My appreciation also goes to Mr. De Mistura for his informative briefing, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for his dedicated service during his term as the Secretary-General's Special Representative. Japan has greatly appreciated all his efforts and work over almost two years. And I also congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as the new Special Representative. We are confident in his ability to lead the Mission and wish him all the best.

Japan greatly appreciates the efforts of the Afghan and German Governments in convening the International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, and welcomes the renewed mutual commitments made between Afghanistan and the international community to achieving a stable, democratic and prosperous future for Afghanistan. This year marks the tenth anniversary since the new Afghanistan took its first step in nation-building in 2001. Throughout the decade, that nation-building, led by Afghanistan with the support of the international community, has made considerable progress. At the same time, numerous challenges still remain to be tackled, requiring close cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community.

First, it is vital to ensure stability and permanent progress in the security transition, through the political process. We welcomed the start of the transition process in July, and the approval of the transition's second phase in November. An Afghan-led national reconciliation, with the support of the international community, is indispensable to furthering the transition process. It is also important to accelerate reintegration so that the progress and results achieved in this area can be consolidated. Japan is pleased that nearly 3,000 reintegrees have joined the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme. We will continue to actively assist Afghan-led efforts with the Programme.

The second issue is achieving sustainable growth for Afghanistan. That goal can be attained only through a strong partnership between Afghanistan and the international community throughout the Transformation Decade. The international community should cooperate with the Afghan Government in strengthening the sustainability and self-reliance of its economic and fiscal management, in order to alleviate the expected macro-economic impact of the transition.

The third issue is regional cooperation. A stable and cooperative relationship between Afghanistan and other countries in the region is indispensable to achieving enduring stability for Afghanistan. We therefore welcome the outcome of the Istanbul Conference and stress the importance of promoting regional economic cooperation in the development of the whole region, by strengthening Afghanistan's links to the regional and global economies.

We must further consolidate the transition process and put the greatest possible effort into outlining a clear picture for the Transformation Decade. The areas of governance, security, the peace process, economic and social development, and regional cooperation are interlinked and should be addressed in a well-coordinated manner. As the recent report of the Secretary-General states (S/2011/772*), a balanced approach to security and non-security considerations is needed in order to promote the long-term stability of Afghanistan up to and beyond 2014.

In that context, as announced at the Bonn Conference, Japan intends to host a ministerial conference in Tokyo next July as a follow-up to Bonn. In addition to the coordination of international economic assistance through the transition period, the conference will address Afghanistan's strategy for sustainable development, including regional economic cooperation. We expect to have hold discussions aimed at identifying the Afghan Government's most immediate priorities in the quest for fiscal sustainability and development needs. We hope to

cooperate closely with Afghanistan, the international community and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in preparing for the conference.

Japan looks forward to a comprehensive review of UNAMA's mandate and of United Nations support in Afghanistan. That will be a very important task for the United Nations in the context of steering the future course of Afghanistan. UNAMA continues to play an important role, and Japan will continue to do its utmost to contribute to its activities.

In conclusion, we would like to once again express our sincere appreciation for the dedication of Special Representative of the Secretary-General de Mistura, and to reiterate our commitment to supporting UNAMA's efforts under Mr. Kubiš and all the men and women of UNAMA who have demonstrated their deep commitment to this difficult mission.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/772*) on the situation in Afghanistan, and would like to thank Special Representative Staffan de Mistura for his service. We would also particularly like to congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on taking on this challenging position and pledge our full support to him.

We also welcome the outcome of the Conference recently held in Bonn, which sends a clear message: Afghanistan can count on the long-term support of the international community, both during and long after transition is scheduled to finish by the end of 2014. Afghanistan is progressing in the transition, which will result in the full ownership and sovereignty of the Afghan people and a political system founded on the Afghan Constitution, based on the rule of law and in accordance with international human rights obligations.

One aspect of particular importance and sensitivity in that complex process is the situation of women, in the areas both of fighting all forms of gender discrimination and of ensuring women's effective participation in the political process, in line with the Council's agenda on women and peace and security. During the Bonn Conference, numerous Government representatives, including our Foreign Minister, made clear statements on the importance of supporting women's rights and participation as part of the transition and peace processes in Afghanistan, and of safeguarding the advances that have been made in that area in the past decade.

We believe that the United Nations, and therefore the Council, has a crucial role to play in this respect. With the Council's renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) due in March 2012, we believe that a discussion of the aspects of the situation in Afghanistan relating to women, peace and security — with a view to informed negotiations within the framework of the mandate renewal — would be timely. The Government of Liechtenstein, in partnership with the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University, is therefore offering to host a workshop in Liechtenstein on implementation of the agenda on women, peace and security in Afghanistan from 28 to 30 January.

The outcome of those discussions should be fed into the Council's negotiating process on UNAMA's mandate renewal. Participants will include Afghan women leaders, both from the Government and civil society, senior United Nations officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, academics and State representatives, particularly of those countries that are Security Council members.

We hope that that meeting, which was supported by the delegations of Afghanistan and Germany, can make a concrete contribution to the preparations for the renewal of the mandate and also offer a unique opportunity to the Council to integrate its thematic work in its country-specific activities. We hope that Council members will be able to accept that invitation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Kethergany (Malaysia): I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of Mr. Hussein Haniff, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations.

Let me first of all welcome the presence of Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan.

My delegation extends its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his latest report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2011/772*). My delegation also extends our appreciation to Mr. Staffan de Mistura and members of the United Nations Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the dedication and resilience they have shown in carrying out their duties under challenging conditions in the country. Let me also join others in congratulating Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment to replace Special Representative de Mistura next year.

Ten years ago, the Security Council determined that the situation in Afghanistan constituted a threat to international peace and security. Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Council authorized the creation of the International Stabilization Assistance Force (ISAF) to assist the Afghan Interim Administration, headed by the recently appointed Chairman Hâmid Karzai. That turning point in the history of Afghanistan was marked by resolution 1386 (2001), adopted on 20 December 2001.

Ten years later, we are pleased to see that President Karzai is leading the country out of the morass of the unfortunate conflict there. We are now witnessing another turning point in Afghan history, with the transfer of security responsibilities from ISAF to the Afghan National Security Forces. However, much more needs to be done to improve the security situation in Afghanistan.

Malaysia joins the Security Council and the international community in condemning the horrific attacks in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif that took place on 6 December. My delegation remains concerned about the continued targeted assassinations of high-ranking Government officials, members of the security forces and influential local political and religious leaders. We also express our condolences to the survivors of those who perished in the attack by insurgents on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facility in Kandahar on 31 October. Our thoughts go to the victims and families of those affected by all those tragic incidents.

Of no less importance, however, is the increasing number of civilians killed in Afghanistan; that is an issue about which my delegation is particularly concerned. Last month, the Council heard Ms. Navanethem Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, express the concern that the increase in civilian casualties was occurring "in a climate characterized by a lack of accountability for serious violations of international law" (see S/PV.6650).

While the deliberate targeting of civilians by anti-Government elements should rightfully be condemned, it is even more disturbing to note that pro-Government and NATO-led ISAF forces may be responsible for a significant percentage of civilian casualties. Malaysia therefore calls upon all parties to respect both the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law, in order to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

Winning the battle for hearts and minds is something that Malaysia has persistently advocated, given our experience in dealing with armed insurgencies during the formative years of our own nationhood. Indeed, it was in that same spirit that we accepted the invitation by the Afghan Government to join the ISAF, and, in July 2010, 40 members of the Malaysian Armed Forces medical contingent were deployed to the Bamyan province. Their mandate is to provide medical, dental and health-care services to the Afghan civilian population. They have since been recognized by their ISAF partners and the local populace as providers of innovative solutions, sensitive to the local social and religious context.

I cannot stress enough the value that Malaysia places on winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Accordingly, and out of respect for the country's democracy and Constitution, non-violence and the rights of all Afghan people, my delegation supports the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation and reintegration process, which is a political process that deserves the focused attention and support of the international community. We should now be concentrating on non-military options in order to complement and subsequently seal the gains that Afghanistan has achieved to date. My delegation believes that the way forward is to open a clear line of communication with those leaders who disagree with the Government but who have renounced violence and accepted the Afghan Constitution.

Malaysia strongly believes that human capacity-building represents an important building block in nation-building and, in the case of Afghanistan, in rebuilding the country. Human capacity-building is also the most practical way forward for Afghanistan to

achieve greater and more sustainable growth and development. To that end, Malaysia will continue to provide technical assistance to Afghanistan through our various technical training and capacity-building programmes.

As of October 2011, a total of 399 Afghans have benefited from the many Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme courses offered in such areas as diplomacy, public administration, the judiciary, banking, engineering and customs administration. The Malaysian Defence Cooperation Programme has provided training for several Afghan military officers in tactics and the Arabic language. Malaysia also facilitates joint capacity-building initiatives through our Third Country Training Programme, such as the Malaysia-Australia Education Project for Afghanistan, which provides trainer training for Afghan lecturers and teachers in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia's commitment to supporting the international community's efforts to assist Afghanistan was further underlined by the participation of our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Anifah Aman, at the recent International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its commitment to Afghanistan in the areas of governance, security, the peace process, economic and social development and regional cooperation, as agreed at the Bonn Conference.

In conclusion, the International Conference on Afghanistan had the theme, "From Transition to the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024". Malaysia looks forward to continuing to play a meaningful role in Afghanistan's development, not just for the 10 years of the transformation decade, but for many more decades to come.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We congratulate you, Mr. President and your team for ably guiding the work of the Security Council for the month of December, and we thank you for convening today's debate. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing.

Pakistan greatly values the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in coordinating a comprehensive international effort in Afghanistan. In the past, we have welcomed the enhancement of that role in political and security fields. We hope that the review of UNAMA's mandate will enable the United Nations to make more meaningful contributions to peace and development of Afghanistan.

On its part, Pakistan is committed to peace, stability and development in Afghanistan. On 15 December, our honourable Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, stated in the Parliament of Pakistan:

> "I would also like to reiterate that Pakistan, as a peace-loving country, remains committed to promoting stability and peace in our region, in particular Afghanistan.
>
> "We have, in all earnestness, extended a hand of friendship to the people and government of Afghanistan. As immediate neighbours and sincere well-wishers of the people of Afghanistan, we remain committed to promote the best of relations in all spheres".

In his report (S/2011/722*) under consideration today, the Secretary-General termed Pakistan's bilateral relations with Afghanistan as paramount in furthering peace, reconciliation and stability. That is a valid observation. We are committed to peace, reconciliation and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan looks forward to contribute, as effectively as possible, in an environment free from recrimination and blame-gaming and on the basis of mutual respect and trust. Speculative statements made in a knee-jerk reaction to events vitiate the atmosphere and erode mutual trust. Such blame-gaming must stop. Pakistan cannot be held responsible for the problems and the challenges afflicting Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, the international community and Pakistan must work closely and together as responsible partners in a cooperative manner and not rush to judgment or question each other's intentions. It is imperative that we avoid references, such as that made by the representative of France earlier today, which seek to find a convenient scapegoat, while continuing to miss the larger picture.

We are not preaching something that we do not practice. Pakistan has never resorted to blame-gaming, even when militants cross over from the other side and attack our troops and innocent civilians.

The attack on the Pakistan border post on 26 November, which resulted in the martyrdom of 25 soldiers, was a grave incident. It constituted a transgression of Pakistan's territorial integrity and a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. As a result of the 26 November attack, Pakistan was constrained to absent itself from the Bonn Conference. While taking that decision, the Federal Cabinet of Pakistan had,

> "expressed the hope that the international community will reaffirm its support for peace and development in Afghanistan at the forthcoming Bonn Conference. Pakistan looks forward to the success of this Conference".

I will echo our Foreign Minister in acknowledging the invaluable contribution of Germany towards peace in Afghanistan, as well as the commitment of the German leadership to the cause, demonstrated in their efforts to host the Bonn process. We want the international community to succeed in Afghanistan because such success is in Pakistan's own national interest.

I would be remiss if I did not congratulate Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. We assure him of all cooperation and wish him success.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2011/772*) and extend my warm greetings to our good colleague, Mr. De Mistura, whose mission in Afghanistan will come to an end in the near future. Mr. De Mistura's dedication to strengthening peace and stability in Afghanistan is praiseworthy. I would also like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ján Kubiš on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and wish him all success in his new assignment.

The briefings by Mr. De Mistura and by Mr. Jawed Ludin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and other statements presented today touched on key points regarding the situation in Afghanistan, UNAMA's mandate and the prospects of international engagement following the International Conference on Afghanistan that was held recently in Bonn. I therefore wish to take a few minutes to succinctly touch upon some important developments in Afghanistan, from the Iranian perspective.

We have always warned about the negative consequences of the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan and the concerns of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries about the real intentions behind such presence. I want to refer, here, to the case of the drone which took off from a United States base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and violated Iran's airspace. That American unmanned spy plane, dubbed the "Beast of Kandahar", flew 250 kilometres deep into Iranian territory, up to a region near the city of Tabas, and was then brought down by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This act of blatant military air aggression was unprovoked and in contravention of all universally accepted, existing international norms relating to sovereignty and the inviolability of the airspace of sovereign countries. I wonder why this type of airplane, which appears to be only in the possession of United States military intelligence and used mainly to collect intelligence for spying purposes, should have crossed into Iranian airspace in violation of established international law?

It goes without saying, that violating Iranian territorial air space contravenes the basic purpose of the United Nations, that is, to maintain international peace and security and develop friendly relations among nations. Of course, it is not the first time that such a malicious incident has occurred, but I hope it will be the last time. I have already expressed our strong objection by sending a letter to Their Excellencies the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President and members of the Security Council (S/2011/764). The various aspects of that issue remain under consideration by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In relation to another drone-like operation, organized and led by United States military bases in Afghanistan, I would like to refer to a recent case where a well-trained and equipped American national spy agent and a member of the United States military

intelligence forces was identified while leaving the United States base in Bagram, Afghanistan, and entering Iran. This person was on a covert operation. His malicious mission was, fortunately, disrupted by our intelligence. Those are clear examples that the United States uses its bases in Afghanistan for spying purposes as well.

In analysing the situation on the ground and the discussion on longer-term international engagement in Afghanistan, the concerns of the neighbouring countries should be seriously taken into account. That same concern has been expressed by an official of neighbouring Pakistan in relation to the high number of civilian casualties owing to drone operations in Pakistan's northern areas.

It is because of those concerns that we maintain the strong belief that long-term international engagement should not lead to long-term presence and the establishment of permanent military bases or military presence in Afghanistan. We all know that foreign forces entered Afghanistan in the name of countering terrorism and establishing peace and security. A decade has passed. According to many official reports, there has been an increase in the degree of insecurity as compared to the situation last year. The prolonged presence of foreign military forces in whatever form and under whatever justifications therefore will not bring about peace and stability in Afghanistan, but rather it will provide a breeding ground for terrorists and extremist groups to continue their operations.

The other issue is the continuation and increase in the cultivation of narcotic drugs, which is still the most serious challenge not only for Afghanistan but also for those along the drug trafficking routes and the countries of destination. That menace has hindered the country's advance towards development and has put at risk the social cohesion of Afghanistan, along with that of its neighbours. Moreover, narcotic drugs, as the financial source of terrorism in Afghanistan, have served as another breeding ground for terrorists, extremists and illegal groups who attempt to destabilize the Afghan Government.

On 28 November, Iran's Minister of the Interior took part in the ministerial meeting of the counter-narcotic Triangular Initiative held in Kabul. Since its launch in 2007, that Initiative has promoted information exchange and intelligence-led operations targeting the major transnational networks, while building confidence. The drug control operations coordinated by the joint planning within that framework have resulted in the seizure of several tons of illicit drugs and the arrest of many drug traffickers.

Yet another issue is the long-standing problem of Afghan refugees. We look forward to the international conference planned for the spring of 2012, which is to be held with the participation of Iran and Afghanistan and aimed at exploring a comprehensive long-term strategy for resolving the issue of refuges. We hope that that conference will lead to concrete and substantive outcomes that can offer real solutions. We have hosted an average of about 3 million Afghan nationals over the past three decades. At present, more than 1 million Afghan refugees are registered in Iran, while a greater number of unregistered Afghans are also living in our country. For all these years, Afghan nationals have continued to enjoy Iran's educational and welfare facilities, among other things, as well as to benefit from the same subsidies that Iranian nationals receive. We again urge the international community to continue to strengthen and expedite its efforts to create the conditions conducive to the sustainable repatriation of refugees and their full rehabilitation and reintegration in their homeland.

On regional cooperation, we have continued our talks with Afghan authorities on a bilateral, trilateral and regional basis to further strengthen our cooperation, particularly in relation to increasing our coordination on security matters, counter-narcotic efforts, illegal immigration and the completion of developmental projects, including the construction of roads and railways. Fortunately, we have been able to establish a good record. For example, with respect to railroads, we will soon witness the completion of a railway network in the region that will connect the landlocked Central Asian countries and Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf. By integrating Afghanistan to the railway system in Central Asia, Afghan economic integration in the region will be eased to a great degree.

In the trilateral summit meeting held in Tehran in June, the Presidents of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan agreed to join forces in combating militancy. All sides stressed their commitment to efforts aimed at eliminating extremism, militancy and terrorism. In that respect, a number of projects have already been finished and some new agreements reached. We look

forward to more agreements on bilateral, trilateral and multilateral bases.

We are now in the preparatory phase for an upcoming trilateral summit in Islamabad between the heads of State of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the three countries met in Tehran on 16 October. We hope that the improved political atmosphere will permit the continuation of that initiative.

Earlier this month we held the Bonn Conference. The Conference was an opportunity for neighbouring countries and international partners to exchange views on how to move ahead in creating a stable and prosperous Afghan-led process. We hope that the outcome of the Bonn Conference will help to develop measures aimed at addressing common challenges on political and security issues, lead to concrete steps to eliminate extremism, militancy and terrorism, and pave the way for increased economic prosperity for Afghanistan with the active participation of all the neighbouring and regional countries in the infrastructural and developmental projects in line with the wishes of Afghan people and Government. Any initiatives elaborated in the Bonn Conference should strengthen the trust between Afghanistan and its neighbours through active engagement, interaction and partnerships.

The neighbouring countries of Afghanistan share critical interests in Afghanistan's security and long-term stability and have a role to play in promoting Afghanistan's socio-economic development. Obviously, the prospect of a stable and flourishing Afghanistan would be an ideal situation for its neighbours and the wider region, and in particular for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The continuing engagement between Afghanistan and its neighbours and regional partners in the areas of trade, economic development and infrastructure development must therefore be supported. In that connection, we should also emphasize the central role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts in Afghanistan, which is of paramount importance and enjoys our full support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan has requested the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ludin (Afghanistan): It has been a true honour to be part of today's discussion and to listen to the friends and partners of Afghanistan. I am grateful to the Security Council for keeping Afghanistan on its radar and for including it on the agenda for this very substantive discussion. I hope that this will continue. I am also grateful to the individual countries whose representatives have spoken today, both members of the Council and those from outside, for their support, friendship and cooperation with Afghanistan. We appreciate their partnership.

I am also very pleased that the Council issued a statement regarding the Bonn conference, which, as I said earlier, was an extremely important event on Afghanistan's calendar this year. For it to have the blessing and support of the Security Council is further progress in that direction. I also welcome the reference to the Istanbul Conference. Regional cooperation, as we heard in some of the statements made earlier today, is becoming central to the dialogue surrounding Afghanistan, and the Istanbul process is very promising. We in Afghanistan look forward to furthering it in the next meeting in Kabul.

I would like to raise a few points with regard to the interventions made today. First, I am very grateful to those who expressed condolences and made reference to the loss of life and civilian casualties in connection with some of the terrorist attacks that have taken place in the recent past, in particular the terrorist attack on 6 December, on the day of Ashura. I very much appreciate those sentiments.

Those attacks illustrate the type of challenge that still remains. International terrorism is the most important security obstacle facing Afghanistan today. We have seen new forms of this in the recent past. Today, suicide bombings are responsible for the majority of killings among the Afghan people. That is not something that is unique to Afghanistan, although it is a recent phenomenon in many ways. The only way by which we can tackle this challenge is through intelligence and sincere results-oriented regional cooperation. We cannot do it with armies and military means. I think that the sanctuaries that some terrorist networks enjoy outside Afghanistan represent an extremely important problem that we have to address.

Secondly, concerns were expressed in some statements about the human rights situation, in particular with regard to detention facilities in Afghanistan. I must say that, as soon as the report (S/2011/772*) of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was published, our security institutions and other relevant institutions

began a very extensive inter-agency investigation. With all due respect, I dispute the assertion that the problem is systemic. The occurrence of such things is definitely not systemic. We will investigate and determine the true extent of the situation. We are genuinely committed to improving our prison system. Just to put it in context, those are institutions that we have together in cooperation with most of the countries here. We have established those institutions, and it will take time for them to really improve. Nevertheless, obviously, torture and abuse of the nature mentioned are absolutely intolerable. They are as intolerable for any Afghan as they are to any other person in the international community.

On the UNAMA mandate review, we are really pleased that the United Nations has taken that very seriously and that there is an ongoing review. We welcome that review. Consistent with the transition process, we think that UNAMA's role should be more responsive to Afghanistan's desire to take leadership and responsibility. We are grateful for the positive response and the way in which our desire has been received here in the Security Council. But that is in absolutely no way intended to diminish the role of the United Nations. We Afghans take that role very seriously. We are absolutely sure that this role will evolve into something as important, except different.

Lastly, with regard to the concern raised by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we take the concerns of our regional partners extremely seriously. For a country like Afghanistan in the past 10 years, I think that the amount of attention and the focus we have placed on the concerns of our friends, brothers and partners in our neighbourhood, in particular those of our close neighbours, have been very extensive. We have often and always reassured our partners that Afghans would never allow our territory to be used against any country, including our neighbours.

With regard to Iran in particular, we have been blessed by the understanding that Iran and the United States have shown in the past 10 years with regard to Afghanistan's need to maintain a balance in this relationship. That understanding on both sides — the United States and Iran — has been very helpful to us and enabled us to bring together countries from across the world to cooperate on our soil. We hope that this understanding will continue, for the sake of Afghanistan. Our commitment to our neighbours remains unchanged and is as strong as ever. On this particular issue, we are holding discussions with both countries and following up.

In conclusion, the concept of the Transformation Decade is a heartwarming development for the people of Afghanistan. It illustrates the sort of commitment that the Afghan people want for when the transition period comes to an end. I am glad that significant reference has been made to the Transformation Decade in the various statements made here today. I think that the conferences that will take place next year — the Chicago conference on the security side and the Tokyo conference on the economic development side — will take this discussion forward and establish a framework for the idea of the Transformation Decade.

It has been a true honour to be here today. I am very grateful.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Deputy Foreign Minister Ludin for his statement.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.